

TOWARDS A **BRIGHTER FUTURE**



*for You
Mankind and
Mother Earth*

HENNING JON GRINI

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ISBN-13: 978-1520539423

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Original title: Gaia og Mennesket *mot en lysere fremtid*
Translated from Norwegian to English by Vivian Nielsen and Henning
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Cover and Layout: Henning Jon Grini
Cover illustration: © NASA (background except flare), foreground by:
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*«When the earth is sick and polluted, human health is
impossible...
To heal ourselves we must heal our planet, and to heal our planet
we must heal ourselves.»*

- Bobby McLeod

Introduction

Earth, our beautiful planet, is shaped like a circle. The circle has since time immemorial been regarded as a symbol of eternity. It has been used in religious rituals and what in the old days was regarded as witchcraft and magic. In our time, the circle is used in various ways. In the wedding ring, for instance, the circle is used as a symbol. The circle is also ingenious when it comes to practical things, and is, for instance, used as a wheel for cars or to generate power like in windmills or water turbines.

There is a greater power in this symbol than one might think about. In the film trilogy «The Lord of the Rings», which had great success in the movies not so long ago, the ring had the power to rule the world. I would claim that the meaning and principle of the circle are more important than ever. The circle can be related to a lot of things, everything from wholeness to cycles. It can mean unity, eternity, recycling, circulation, holism, and integration. We will go through this and how we can implement this into our lives, as well as in a global context.

As mankind, we are now facing enormous challenges. From an environmental point of view, we apparently are in trouble due to all the problems we have created. But only apparently. The environmental problems have been necessary for making us understand that we need to change and do things differently. Contrasts are necessary for development. Without darkness, we cannot see the light.

I strongly believe that when mankind wakes up and turns around, which we are about to do, we will be able to solve our problems. It's also a potential that we can turn faster than many think, regardless of what's happening on the global and political arena, like Trump as the new president of America. In fact, he might help accelerate the development unconsciously in the long run, because the contrast created wakes the opposite forces and makes them stronger and more united. We must,

because of that, look further than one presidential period. This book has, therefore, in many ways an optimistic and positive view on our future. In the long run, more and more things throughout the world are going better. While reading this book, you will discover that there *are* reasons for hope and optimism. Much of this is not noticed by the «radar» of mainstream media.

To make this happen, there is no way around changes, both on a personal and collective level. It is understood that the way we have been living our lives doesn't work anymore. A lot of the things we get involved in is dysfunctional. When you get some perspective, you understand that we have led ourselves into these vicious circles. This book is therefore about identifying them, finding the real reasons as to why they have occurred and what we can do about them. Then we can replace them with golden circles, which we create for ourselves and for humanity. Actually, the working title for this book was «The golden circles».

The changes we are facing are necessary, and they cannot be avoided. As mankind, we are developing, we grow in understanding, insight, and wisdom (mainly through contrasts) and this cannot be stopped. It's the same way with a child, you cannot stop it from growing, neither physically nor mentally. *Mankind is now experiencing growing pains in form of our global crises.* These crises give us an opportunity to grow.

It's therefore not just the environmental problems that «forces» us and give us an opportunity to grow, so also in other areas such as the temporarily rise in right-wing politics lately. The growth that has been accomplished in the past is not lost. It might be temporarily on halt or suppressed. It can't even be reversed (even if it looks like this because of political decisions) only suppressed. The same goes for religious decisions. What is suppressed will sooner or later burst. The growth will gather a momentum that will burst throughout the world in the coming years. Like renewable is busting now, so will stronger and more just democracies and other systems of government and the development of society in general. Mankind is growing faster than ever before.

We can clearly see how dysfunctional these vicious circles are when it comes to the environment and how we pollute. The same goes for

economic disparity and how this helps to create suffering among people and at the same time give rise to conflicts. Religions, which in many ways were supposed to lead the human closer to the divine, usually stands for old fashioned and outdated views on life, that not only creates huge problems but also removes us from the divine.

Other areas are not better off. We can mention enormous health problems, with everything from lifestyle diseases in the rich part of the world to malnutrition and disease outbreaks in the developing world. Much of the food we eat and what we drink are unhealthy and contains questionable additives. On the political arena, there are still dictators and in some countries, we face absurd corruption. Some places, women, and people who are different are still regarded as something of lesser value and thus treated accordingly.

What is evident is that we have created these problems by ourselves, but since we have created them we can also solve them. It is also like so when one finds a solution, and this must be on a deep underlying level to be lasting, a chain reaction is created penetrating through the layers and further on to other structures of society. This is the magical formula, as many others also have proclaimed. We need to find the underlying reasons as to why the world is in the shape we see today. Only then will we be able to solve all the problems the world faces. These underlying reasons exist and the most important ones, in my opinion, will be presented in this book.

When it comes to the environmental problems, there are some who believes that technology alone can solve them. It will help, but it can far from solve everything. Technology can't control people's emotions or behavior. The fact that the world has a high and increasing consumption of meat, is not something that technology necessarily can fix either. Agriculture, which produces the meat, is responsible for a significant part of the greenhouse emissions. Changes on a personal level are needed so that the consumption of meat will be limited as much as possible.

The earth is incredibly beautiful. The ecosystems of the earth are amazing systems connected and intertwined with and in each other. The whole thing is unbelievable complexed. We, humans, are completely

dependent on them. If we mess with them, we get problems, and that is also what has happened. The problems and the crises we are facing are both difficult to grasp and complex. In many ways, they also feel insurmountable, but that is not true. We will also look into this later in the book.

It is not the planet, which is in most need of help and healing, it is us humans. The planet will manage without us. It also has self-repairing mechanisms. We humans can support this and help make the repair phase go faster.

It is us humans who have inflicted the planet, and thus ourselves, with countless problems and crises. This is due to outdated ways of thinking, belief systems, and attitudes. So, the help we can give ourselves is to identify and deprogram them and then find new ones to implement. It is important to emphasize that there is nothing wrong with us. As I see it, we are only at an early stage of our development.

In addition, we should also learn how nature has organized itself, in other words, we need to understand the language of nature. Nature will be our teacher and it has much to teach us. Cycles, circulation, cooperation, and symbiosis have a central place in this. Nature is amazing and has made use of these things in ingenious ways for eons.

As mankind, we have gotten ourselves into many vicious circles. Or we could say that we have entangled ourselves in them. We have made the whole thing very complicated. To get out of it, we need to disentangle. We need development. This book is a journey into many of this vicious circles so that we can understand them and know why they have occurred. Only when we do this, we have the possibility to break with them and create golden circles, so that we all can walk towards a brighter future.

Chapter 1

My childhood summer paradise

«There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.»

- Albert Einstein

In the big city, where I grew up in the outskirts, there was plenty of asphalt, humans, and noise. In my childhood summer paradise, out in the countryside, life was peaceful, quiet, and yet full of life. We spent some weeks there every summer and we always looked forward to it with great joy.

On the countryside, I ran countless times past the cows and down the grassy field, which stretched all the way from the house we lived in, to the beach we could see from the house. I loved the beach and the smell of it. And I ran, because life there and then was carefree and full of small and large pleasures, not least because it was so much to explore. I loved to look for life along the beach, especially crabs who hid below the rocks and all the pliers, but also small fish, like flounder, that wasn't at all easy to catch. There were so much to explore and experience. I could spend countless hours down there and when I was finished, I released my catch back into the sea. Sometimes I brought it home to show off my catch before I released it.

These experiences from my childhood summer paradise have never faded from my memory. Countless beautiful and dear memories from

that place. It was a great time, not only for me, but for the whole family. Summer, sun, and vacation time help a lot, but also grindstone and an outhouse. The walls of the outhouse were, by the way, decorated with countless pictures cut out of magazines. And the light poured in through a little heart in the door. The outhouse is not a standard today of cause, but we were happy nonetheless. Here, in the countryside, there was an abundance of fruit trees, gooseberries, rhubarb, and other crops.

To wake up in the attic to freshly made rolls covered with homemade raspberry jam, was one of the «small» pleasures I was so lucky to experience. Or all the times when my brother and I went to bed and the whisperings and mutterings were not as quiet as we thought. One time, when we went fishing from a boat, I caught a cod almost as long as myself.

Other, mentionable pleasures, were all the wonderful smells from the nature that surrounded the house, as well as the beautiful roses along the house walls. And the heat from the sun that made the ground shiver. All the chirping from the sparrow flock, who were fed all the time, especially because of my aunt, whom we stayed with, threw so many crumbs for them. The large house where we were staying, also housed a bakery and a small general store. In the general store, they sold ice cream, and the exhibition included a glass cabinet filled with chocolate and other temptations. I say no more...

This continued for years. Oh, all the fun I had with my siblings and friends. We did so much merrymaking and the creativity was blooming. We went on safari on a very suspect, home crafted fleet. We visited the animals in the barn and yes, we jumped in the hay too. It was not a place for small or larger children to become bored.

All this had not been possible if it hadn't been for the beautiful nature that surrounded us. To gaze at the sea from our summer paradise was incredibly beautiful. Even if it was summer, we could see snow on the high mountaintops on the other side of the fjord. It was nothing short of magical.

It is nothing more than this that I wish future generations all over the planet should experience. Vigorous nature with trees, animals, flowers,

clean air, beautiful smells, grasshoppers, and maybe some mosquitos... I wish they could experience all of this, not only on the countryside but also, as far as possible, in the cities. That is where most of the people on this planet lives, and in the future, even more people will live there. It is, therefore, more important than ever to create a room where nature can be brought back to the cities and be better implemented, so that they, literary speaking, can flourish. Beautiful surroundings will be reflected in the human psyche. Nature and beautiful surroundings are like balm for the soul.

If we can preserve the summer paradises in the countryside, and recreate some of it in the cities as well, then we have come a long way. And we already *have* come a long way, compared to a few decades ago. Slowly but surely, the air is getting cleaner when even more means of transport switch to renewable energy sources. Parks and green areas are made a priority and are now showing up several places all over the world, and new buildings are in most cases more environmentally friendly and humane. The emissions from the industry are getting cleaner. Just the fact that all these processes are up and running, give important signals, and at the same time, it is self-reinforcing.

Will we someday arrive at a time when the fish will enjoy themselves in the clean waters of city rivers, where green, incredible parks are just around the corner, where the air is clean, where unnatural high noise barely can be heard and where laughter and happiness exists? There is no doubt in my soul that we will get there. But it would help this shift a lot if we pulled together and did the best we could. And when we begin to pull together, then everything will go faster. So yes, the summer paradise of childhood still can be experienced, not only on the countryside but increasingly more in the cities as well.

Chapter 2

Gaia – our living earth

«If somebody said before the flight, 'Are you going to get carried away looking at the Earth from the Moon?' I would have to say, 'No, no way.' But yet when I first looked back at the Earth, standing on the Moon, I cried.»

- Alan Shepard, the first American in space and the fifth astronaut to walk on the moon

When the astronauts went into space to explore the moon, they realized that the most important thing they ended up exploring was the earth.

We, humans, are fortunate to have been a part of this journey with earth. We don't need a ticket to participate, and everyone is welcome. It has given us everything we need, like free food and drink, air to breathe and a protecting atmosphere. It has also given us an amazing nature, that truly can take your breath away. There are fantastic mountains, surrounded by lovely waters and rivers. You can bathe on a wonderful beach or in a mountain lake. Life is immensely rich and has infinite variations. It's almost too good to be true, but it is. This is nothing else than a paradise and this paradise is our earth and our home planet – Gaia.

The sun is the source which provides the basis for life on our planet. It gives us heat and energy. It gives us light and bright days. From the moon, we get ebb and flow, and poetry. There are so much to admire, reflect on and be grateful for. The trees produce the oxygen we humans

use when we breathe in. What we breathe out is called carbon dioxide, and is something the trees need to live. A genius symbiosis all parts benefit from. And there are plenty of symbiosis on this planet.

In the 1970s, James Lovelock, together with Lynn Margulis, put forth the so-called «Gaia-hypothesis», an assumption that the planet can be compared with a gigantic, self-healing, living organism and that we are a part of her. The word Gaia means Earth Goddess. In ancient Greek religion and mythology, Gaia was a goddess or a divine personification of the earth. Gaia and Mother Earth means more or less the same.

Since we are both living organisms, there are many similarities between man and earth. If you, during a period of one year, looked down on Earth at the North Pole, concentrated it down into a second and then repeated it, it would look like the Earth is breathing. The North Pole, with its ice and snow, contracts during summer and expands during winter. Some years ago, NASA made an **animation** like that, based on satellite images seen from the North Pole. It looks like the planet is alive and breathing, and in my view, it really is.

Microcosm and macrocosm mirror each other. The rivers and the ocean currents on the earth are like the blood vessels in a human. And the blood better be pure, otherwise, we'll be sick. The rivers and the oceans are no longer clean. This is known by everybody who lives in a city with a river running through it. This is something that pains me. In my youth, I loved to go fishing in rivers and waters, particularly for trout, but also salmon. Time flew and I felt as one with nature. Today it is difficult for me to see the polluted rivers. I have great sympathy for all that lives in a river and everywhere else in our beautiful nature.

An event that took place in the early 90s, did that I almost never fished again. I witnessed two trout playing (or mating) in a calm water. They were rolling around each other with gracious movements. This went on for a while and I stood quite still, to not disturb the moment. It touched me to see them play in such a loving and tender way. It felt like a sacred and magical moment which I, by no means, wanted to disturb. It suddenly dawned on me that fish has a life. I already knew this of course, but witnessing this on a quiet and peaceful sunny day, all alone

in nature, was something else. That day, I gained a larger respect for the trout and for all life in nature. I could no longer bear the thought of pulling fish out of the waters, with a hook in their mouth, and then just beat them to death. Today, I dislike seeing fish farms. The fish is robbed of a rich and natural life, and that doesn't feel right. I get the same feeling when it comes to animals.

This respect for nature, and to look upon it as sacred, is something that has been lacking for too long a time. In our corner of the world, it's probably only Iceland that has a little humility and respect for nature, generally speaking. This might originate from their more widespread beliefs in fairies and nature spirits. On the other side, trends towards greater respect and humility are emerging in other places as well. The Nature programs hosted by David Attenborough have been a great help in this.

Because of our negative influence on Gaia, it has, in a way, become ill. In other words, it has been warmed up and has now caught a fever. And the human being is the virus causing this. When the human being has fever, the immune system will fight the fever with help from the white blood cells. The virus that has infected the earth can also be combated. The virus is the human being, but at the same time other humans, like the white blood cells in human beings, combat this virus. We are both the cause and the solution. Just like in the human body, the human «white blood cells» must be numerous and strong enough to gain the upper hand, so that earth can regain its former glory. We are not there yet, but neither are we far away.

It's not about getting rid of the «virus», but to transform it into «white blood cells». This way it will become part of the «medicine». What does it take to make Gaia's human «white blood cells» numerous and strong enough? An important factor is to change our view of her. Plenty of people doesn't regard Gaia as something that's alive. They regard Gaia and nature as something that is separated from us and seems to believe that we are the ones who should rule over it and everything that lives there. This attitude creates behavior and actions which leave the way open to exploit her. The consequences are disastrous. If we, on the other

hand, view Gaia as sacred and very much alive, the situation is completely turned upside down. The «virus» is transformed to «white blood cells». When increasingly more people adopt this view, it will lead to actions and behavior that supports Gaia with respect and humility, and in the end, this will stop our exploitation of her.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle where Gaia is viewed as something dead that can be exploited, and go over to a golden circle where Gaia is viewed as alive and sacred.

We, humans, are the only life on the planet that the earth doesn't need, but we cannot make it without earth. Said this way, it sounds like there is no use for us, that we are unnecessary and only a bother. If you look at the state of the world and what kind of problems we manage to create both for ourselves and for Mother Earth, you could almost believe it to be true. But, hold on a second, nothing is further from the truth! I want to turn it all around. I am one of those who claims that everything is created for a reason. Behind everything, there is unbelievable intelligence, wisdom, and love. Can intelligent, conscious, and creative beings like us humans, and other beings through the universe (In my opinion, believing that there is no other intelligent life in the universe other than us, is the same as believing that the earth is flat), be the main reason for the existence of everything? If that is the case, then earth is there for us. Apparently, earth doesn't need us, but at the same time earth exist because of us. We humans mean something, yes, and more than that, we are important, beautiful, and loving beings, all of us with no exceptions. We just happen to be in an early stage of our development, where the «darkness» inside of us (in the form of unresolved issues, lack of experience and empathy) has to be resolved and developed. In my opinion, this is also the main reason as to why we have not been included in the «galactic community». We have the potential to create paradise here on earth, as well as on other places in the universe. Yes, and I will also claim that it is intended that we should create a paradise, eventually. How? As we know, «darkness» can only be conquered by light. And

where is this «darkness»? Once again, it's inside of us, and there is where we must shine.

If we assume that Gaia is alive, isn't it also natural to view the entire universe as alive too? Why should this be true only for earth, and not for the rest of the enormous universe? The American **Duane Elgin** is one who sees the universe as a living thing. In the book, *The Living Universe*, he points at strong evidence for a living universe, both from a scientific perspective as well as the world religions. Duane Elgin explains thoroughly the difference between viewing the universe as dead, and what that leads to, against viewing the universe as alive. According to him, viewing the universe as dead causes alienation and despair. While viewing the universe as alive causes inspirational and amazing visions about a more meaningful road for mankind. I quote from the book:

The universe as a dead system:

The universe is a barren and inhospitable place, which almost exclusively consists of non-living matter and empty space. Life is extremely rare. On earth, the matter has somehow organized itself in a complex way, so that living units have occurred. But if you look at the universe as one; the human undertaking is a negligible exception. Our existence as humans seems meaningless and without purpose – a cosmic coincidence that will be forgotten. A dead universe has no memory and tells no tales. When the body dies, the lights go off and we disappear without any trace or remains, both physical and non-physical. What matters then are material possessions, material power, material pleasure and material prestige.

The universe as a living system:

This gives us a universe full of invisible energy and life; designed for patient emergence of a comprehensive, cosmic garden. Inside such a paradigm, we humans, as a conscious lifeform in the unit, will be highly valuable. Through us, the universe sees, knows, feels, and learns. The matter is not always what's most important, but the things that are invisible – the deeply living inside us, in our connections and in the world around us.

Sometime or another, all humans must take a stand about themselves. Are we only biological, random beings, controlled by instincts and when we die we disappear for never to exist anymore? Or are we spiritual, valuable beings who temporarily exist in a body, where there are purpose and meaning to our existence, which also continues after our earthly lives? I am completely convinced, also about the last part. I was born into a family without any specific beliefs. This enabled me to study the great questions in life, without a large burden to get rid of. I have been interested in, studied, philosophized, and worked with the large questions most of my adult life, both professionally as well as private. My conclusion is that everything sums of life, both on Gaia and in the universe. And everything is spirited.

When you stand on the moon and look down on earth, you don't see the national borders. You don't see everything that divides us, either that is race or differences in religion and languages. We are all traveling *together* on this lovely planet, Gaia. And this is the key. This is what can open the door to paradise. Community, togetherness. We should look at humankind as *one big community*, and include Gaia and the universe. That is what's creating peace. We should stop looking at us, Gaia, and the universe as fragmented and separated. When we realize that we are one with everything, that we are one big community, we will start treating nature as sacred, Gaia and the universe as sacred and us humans as sacred. This is very well pointed out in the film **Planetary**.

The earth is so incredibly beautiful that it can transform people's life. When the astronaut Edgar Mitchell saw the earth from the space station in 1971, he was very touched. The experience was so strong and Gaia so beautiful that it transformed his life. It was like glimpsing the divine:

«Suddenly, from behind the rim of the Moon, in long, slow-motion moments of immense majesty, there emerges a sparkling blue and white jewel, a light, delicate sky-blue sphere laced with slowly swirling veils of white, rising gradually like a small pearl in a thick sea of black mystery. It takes more than a moment to fully realize this is Earth . . . home.»

- Edgar D. Mitchell, Apollo 14 astronaut

Chapter 3

Human impact on the environment

*«Only when the last tree has died and the last river has been
poisoned and the last fish has been caught will we realize we cannot
eat money.»*

- Indian saying

In 2017, there are around 7,5 billion humans on earth and according to UN, this will increase to around 11,2 billion in 2100, before it will decrease again. In many industrialized countries, the population is already decreasing, while it increases in third-world countries. This is especially true in Africa, where most of the increase will occur, both because many babies are born there but also because they will live longer. The population of the world can and should preferably be fewer in 2100 than the prognosis given by UN tell us, but to achieve this we must prioritize the third world, especially Africa. If poverty in those third-world countries can be reduced, living conditions increased, differences be combated and education of the females be strengthened, then the number of children per family will decrease automatically. I suggest a Marshall Plan for the third-world.

Between now and the year 2030, countries all over the world mobilize to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change with the UN's 17 **Sustainable Development Goals**. It's not a Marshall Plan but it's a god start.

With so many humans, there is no longer a question *if* we have an impact on Gaia. And since there will be more of us in the future, it's even more important to reduce this impact. It's, therefore, important to get some insight into the consequences our impact has resulted in for Gaia. Later in the book, we will look at why it has become like this and what we can do to turn the situation around.

When it comes to the environment, scientists around the world agree that the climate changes we are experiencing now are mostly created by humans. We affect the climate by burning coal, oil, and gas, but also by deforestation, agriculture and different industrial processes, just to mention a few. This means that the atmosphere receives a high concentration of greenhouse gasses, mainly CO₂, which in turn lead to a more powerful greenhouse effect warming up the earth. This, in turn, will lead to more water vapor in the air, which further amplifies the greenhouse effect. It's a vicious circle.

Furthermore, there are many other ways in which we influence the climate. We pollute the oceans, waters, and rivers with our emissions. Cars and transport spread exhaust and noise. And we have soil degradation. Agriculture and breeding farms spread chemicals. We overuse and exploit nature's resources in east and west and so on. It's been suggested to name the period, where the earth has been affected by humans and their activities, Anthropocene. This is because what we humans do have such big consequences for the earth.

It's beyond doubt that the human being has an enormous effect on the environment. There still are those who are skeptical about this. But even the climate skeptics cannot avoid agreeing that we do have an effect. Humans who live in Beijing, China know this, because they must deal with heavily polluted air and many of them must wear masks as daily protection. According to BBC, the air was so polluted some days of December 2016 that it was like smoking 40 cigarettes a day. Even in small Norway (where I live) some of the bigger cities also notice this, when they from time to time must deal with polluted air. Many of those living in California also know it, they experience lack of water due to extreme drought. This is, among other things, caused by a warmer

climate and decrease of groundwater, which in turn is caused when agriculture and industry need water, as drinking water and for watering the garden and so on. Water shortage many other places in the world will increase in the years to come. Too much water is no good either. Early in the summer of 2016, half of China experienced huge amounts of water in the shape of a flood. This had consequences for millions. Some claim that this is partly due to excessive development, which has not taken flood-prone areas into consideration.

It's especially the area around the Mediterranean and Africa, which experience increased drought and a significantly warmer climate. Some scientists even claim that some areas in North-Africa and The Middle East might risk being uninhabitable in the future because it will be too warm to live there. One considers it likely that the climate changes were a contributing cause of the huge forest fire that raged around Fort McMurray in Canada in 2016. There had been no rain for two months and they had just set a heat record. A professor of forest fires, Mike Flannigan from the University of Alberta, says that the number of forest fires in the area has been doubled since the 70s.

Those who lives close to the North Pole, like Svalbard, both notice and can clearly see that the temperature has increased. And if you look at it over the course of many years, the winters have become shorter, and parts of the glaciers and ice have melted. No other places on earth have the temperature increased more than here, and some places the temperature has increased by several degrees. The space agency NASA's institute *Goddard Institute for Space Studies* has, among other things, the responsibility of developing global temperature figures. Their calculations show that April 2016, was the seventh record warm month in a row. In fact, the Earth's surface temperatures for the whole of 2016, were the warmest since modern recordkeeping began in 1880, according to independent analyses by NASA.

Those who live near the coast, and that's many, notice that the sea has risen. This is mainly because the ice and the glaciers are melting due to global warming. Water, which before was tied on land, is now flowing into the sea and thereby causing the sea level to risen. The oceans are

getting warmer, and when water gets warmer it expands and need more space, thus contributing to risen the sea level even further. This makes many densely populated coastal areas in warmer places more exposed to dangerous cyclones and floods. Those who live on the coast outside Bangkok know this well. There, the ground has subsided with about three meters, mostly since too much groundwater is taken out, but also because of the increase in the sea level. Eventually, many of the coastal areas might be uninhabitable. Many of the climate changes are also contributing to create unnecessary illnesses.

The eradication of rainforest and the species who live there is happening at a frightening speed. We lose plenty of biodiversities, which humankind also has benefited from, like for instance for medicines. The rainforest produces oxygen and has thus functioned as one of the «lungs» of the earth. It's not a good strategy to «cut» parts of the lungs we all depend on.

The seas also function as the «lungs» of the earth. They use carbon dioxide and releases oxygen. Algae produce oxygen like plant and trees do on land. Our great and important seas have for too long a time been our dustbins. In addition, the seas, like the atmospheres, take up enormous amounts of greenhouse gasses. It's like the seas should be smoking, and everybody knows that smoking is dangerous. This, together with the increasing temperatures, have an enormous negative and damaging effect on life in the sea. Many coral reeves have, for instance, been extinguished, and others are in the risk zone. If they totally disappear, then the teeming life there have nowhere to live. We humans also depend on the sea. The sea produces food, oxygen, and it regulates the climate. It gives us means for transport, medicines, energy, and plenty of other stuff.

Gaia consists of countless incredible complex ecosystems. It's these systems we bring an imbalance to. The number of wild bees (according to Wikipedia, there are more than 20 000 species of bees in the word), for instance, is decreasing. And the consequence is that not all flowers will be pollinated. When it comes to pollinating, wild bees and other insects are more important than honey bees, which are used in bee-

keeping. This, in turn, stops plants from growing, which in turn can create food shortages and hunger. If we tangle with one system, it will affect all the others. This shows how strongly intertwined everything is.

It is a fact that species is extinguished. It's a natural process that also makes way for the development of new life forms. The book «The Sixth Extinction» by **Elizabeth Kolbert**, discuss this topic very thoroughly. According to her, not only single species faces the danger of extinction, but complete ecosystems. The book talks about mass extinctions throughout the history of the earth, before the entry of humans. The sixth extinction, which takes place right now, is caused by humans.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle, where we are unconscious about our impact on Gaia, and go over to a golden circle, where we are conscious of our impact.

The worst environmental damage man has inflicted on earth is wars. They lead to negative consequences, second to none, for the environment as well as humans. In recent history, Syria is, unfortunately, an example of this. It's unimaginable and baffling that we humans have been at war *against each other* so many times throughout history. During a war, nature means nothing, and the same is, more or less, true about humans. We shall not venture into this comprehensive topic here because it's evident that the consequences and the suffering are tremendous. A positive aspect in all this is that the number of wars, and people killed in wars all over the world, has been decreasing since World War II, with some exceptions in between. Today, there are almost only internal wars, or civil wars, conducted over a longer period. There are, on the other hand, enough violence, as well as conflicts outside of wars.

Mankind has also been doing something else that is quite serious; nuclear testing. We are talking about nuclear weapons far more powerful than the two dropped over Japan at the end of World War II. It all feels absurd, it's insane that we humans have been doing this. The testing is done to find out how these unimaginable destructive weapons will work in a war. These tests inflicted enormous consequences and suffering on

both man and nature. According to Swedish doctors against nuclear weapons, it's been calculated that radioactive fallout from atmospheric nuclear testing, proven in large parts of the world, will lead to at least 600 000 additional cases of cancer by 2100. Around 2055 nuclear tests have been completed, whereof over 1000 by the USA.

Atmospheric nuclear testing meant that large amounts of radioactive materials were spread far in the atmosphere, with subsequent radioactive fallout over land and sea. Already at the end of the 1950s, hundreds of thousand women and men in many countries participated in protest marches and demanded that the nuclear testing came to a stop. Finally, states with nuclear weapon gave in, and in 1963 the first (limited) agreement about test ban was signed. This agreement included a prohibition against all nuclear testing, except the ones that took place under the ground. Such testing under the ground might, by the way, create cracks in the earth, that spread huge amounts of radioactive polluted dirt and water into the surroundings. Large craters under the ground might, in addition, later both open and release radioactive materials. Powerful explosions under the ground might also create earthquakes. An agreement about a halt to all types of nuclear testing (CTBT) from 1996, is signed by 183 countries, whereof 157 have ratified the agreement.

It doesn't take much thinking to realize that man is too immature to handle all the new powers we possess. Nuclear power plants are a very worrisome way to provide energy. In that connection, two known accidents at the nuclear power plants Chernobyl and Fukushima can be mentioned. The Chernobyl accident in 1986, in the former Soviet Union (today Ukraine), had emissions that were 400 times greater than the emission caused by the nukes in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, during World War II. The total number of deaths caused by the accident is calculated up to 9 000 people (this is per a report of 2005 supervised by The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and World Health Organization (WHO)). But, according to Ukraine health authorities, about 15 000 of the 800 000 militaries and civilian who worked with limiting the damages, are now dead related to this work. Cities and large

areas nearby are vacated and will stay that way in the unforeseeable future, since radiation has a very long half-life.

The nuclear power plant in Fukushima on the north-eastern coast of Japan was hit by an earthquake on the 11th of March 2011. The nuclear power plant was built to withstand earthquakes, but it couldn't withstand the tsunami, which hit the power plant afterward. Shortly after, an area with a radius of 20 km around the power plant was cordoned off. It was prohibited to stay inside this area. The 160 000 people who lived here had to be evacuated from their homes. Five years later, most of them have still not been allowed to move home.

New nuclear power plants are being planned or built all over the world. They are more secure than the existing ones, and much research are put into new generations of power plants, like thorium based power plants, but there's still a long way to go before they are completely safe. Furthermore, you can never be safeguarded against human failure, acts of terror and natural disasters. In addition, there will be a health risk connected to the byproduct from the reactors in the power plants. Plutonium is created there, which is suitable for the making of nuclear weapons. Nuclear waste also needs to be stored for thousands of years, and there still is no good solution for long time storage. What's good, is that the industrial nations, like Germany, are considering to limit or drop nuclear power. The worrisome part is that more third-world countries want to build their own nuclear power plants. They have an increasing need for power since many of the inhabitants lacks electricity.

There will always be natural changes in the climate. Sometimes natural climate changes will counteract climate changes created by humans, other times reinforce them. Today, there is little doubt that our effect on the climate is so huge, that climate changes caused by humans overshadow the natural changes on a global basis. We count around 7,5 billion people, whereof very few lives in harmony with nature. That is not without importance.

A report from London School of Economics, published in 2016, estimates that the losses after the devastation of more frequent natural disasters, stricter climate mitigation, and larger global insecurity, will, in

worst case, equal 17 % of the world's total financial values. This equals 24 000 billion dollars. This tells us that the faster we can readjust ourselves from fossil fuels to renewable energy, the lesser the economic consequences, not to mention the consequences for man and all other life on our planet.

An analysis conducted by professor Michael Brauer at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, and several of his international colleagues, concludes that 5,5 million deaths in 2013 are related to air pollution. It's especially populous countries that notice air pollution the most. In China, they mostly use coal and in India, they use much wood and manure for heating and cooking. All this creates much particulate matter, and it's the older generation who is exposed the most. According to Bauer, air pollution is, on a global basis, the fourth-highest risk factor for death.

We must all contribute to the transition from fossil to renewable society, be it individuals, companies, organizations and so on. We cannot just leave the environmental problems to the public or trust that technology will solve everything. Technology cannot solve the fact that we have inequality, overspending, and exploitation.

Agriculture and livestock, directly or indirectly, are responsible for almost 1/3 of the global greenhouse emissions (the figures are gathered from the report Meat Atlas from **The Heinrich Böll Foundation**). They occupy about 45 % of all land in the world. (Scientists from University of Wisconsin-Madison calculated it to be 40 % using satellite images. But this was more than ten years ago.)

There is no doubt that we humans occupy much land, and you can see this for yourself when you are out flying. All the times I, for instance, fly over the southern part of England I can hardly see any area that has not been processed by humans. But you don't need to fly to understand this, all you need to do is to use Google Earth and see for yourself. Agriculture and livestock also use tremendous amounts of water. Significantly more than what is used by humans. Remember that agriculture and the meat industry use a total of 70 billion animals (and who do not always have good living conditions). It takes a lot of water,

energy, and corn to feed all these animals. Several sources claim that the production of a 1-pound steak requires 2,500 gallons of water. All over the world, farmers, who are engaged in agriculture on a small scale, are driven away because the mentality of today favors large-scale farming.

Multinational companies, who have agriculture as one of their work areas (Monsanto, DuPont, Dow, Syngenta, Bayer, BASF), are, at the expense of both humans and nature, mainly concerned with profit. Sufferings of the animals, ecological damages, and health problems are mostly swept under the carpet by these large multinational organizations. Admittedly, these companies have become more considerate, but preferably after pressure from public opinion. Most of the deforestation of the Rainforest happens because there is an ongoing need for more agricultural land, and thereby the meat industry. The Rainforest consists of a great diversity, which significantly has enriched man with, for instance, important medicine. A logical conclusion to all this is that man should eat far less meat and preferably become vegetarians or vegans. This had been better for the health of both Gaia and man. As I have understood, a large consumption of red meat is damaging to the health in several ways. It gives us a greater risk for an early death because we get more exposed to cancer, obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases.

Lab-grown meat could be a promising solution where livestock products are recreated from either animal cells, or plants and algae, which is then reconstituted to look, taste and contain as much protein like the original product. Since the live animal is eliminated from the process, lab-grown products are free of antibiotics and growth hormones and are, of course, cruelty-free.

According to the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** (IPCC), the earth has become almost 1 °C warmer since the 1880s. The scientists are not sure how much the temperature will increase in the future. They are now working to prevent the global temperature exceeding 2 °C, or even better, 1,5 °C. All countries in the world are currently meeting the consequence of climate changes, and this will increase in the years to come. The insurance companies are noticing this

well and will notice it significantly more in the future. The climate changes will also lead to more climate refugees, simply because some parts of the world will be uninhabitable. Today there already *are* areas that are uninhabitable, like the previously mentioned areas around Chernobyl and Fukushima. The island state of Kiribati is going to move its inhabitants because the climate changes (sea level rise) make the islands uninhabitable. The first inhabitants will move in 2020. British Royal Society has estimated that by 2100 between 72 and 187 million people worldwide must flee, due to a rise in the sea level.

But don't despair! The crises speed up the changes. The personal crises we experience in our lives has the advantage that it does something to us. Who has not experienced crises and emerged stronger from them? Subsequently, many have realized that crises got us on the right track. It changed us to the better. *There is no reason that this shouldn't be true on a global level.*

The Solution Project can be a good inspiration. They have world maps showing how far each country has come towards 100 % renewable energy.

A known example of a climate problem that's more or less solved, is the big hole in the ozone layer in the atmosphere, mostly up in the stratosphere (starting about 50 km above the earth). It protects humans and animals from ultraviolet radiation. A consequence of such radiation is that humans might develop skin cancer. For a period, public recommendations were given concerning how much we should sunbathe. The problem occurred when halon and chlorine-containing gasses (KFK) were emitted, partly used in spray bottles, treatment plants, and fire extinguishers. Through the Montreal protocol in 1989, countries committed themselves not to use KFK and halon. A new survey from June 2016, showed that the ozone hole had shrunk by more than 3.9 million square kilometers in ten years. Even if the breakdown of the ozone layer has improved, it will take many years before it's back to a normal level. This is because the gasses have a long life span. According to a report published in 2014 by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO),

the ozone level will be on its 1980 level by 2050, given that the positive development continues. Some scientists even think it will be fully healed by 2050. The replacement substances might not, on the other hand, be any better, so in reality, it is likely that we have moved the problem to other areas. Nonetheless, even if there still is a long way to go, we show the will to do something with the comprehensive environmental problems that we are facing. But as a rule, we need to really feel it before we change.

Acid rain is another familiar example of a mostly solved environment problem. Acid rain leads to the death of fish and damages on the forests. In 1979, many western countries signed the UN-convention about long-range, transboundary air pollution. This led to control the emissions from the industry, so that the air pollution arriving in, for instance, Norway via snow and rain, was strongly reduced.

Rendered below are some suggestions as to what can be introduced both locally and globally, to reduce the pollution. Many are working on these proposals, both nationally and internationally.

Most of the fossil energy sources should remain where they are. We can give good incentives to renewable energy sources and environmentally friendly products, like electric cars. Norway has stepped forward as a shining example that these incentives work. As of December 2016, the Norwegian all-electric fleet consisted of more than 100 000 cars and vans. Norway has the largest per capita in the world. Oslo is recognized as the electric vehicles capital of the world. In the coming years, we are going to see a burst in the development and spread of electric cars. Similar incentives should be increased beyond today's level by, for instance, installing solar panels on roofs. Roof tiles with integrated solar panels exist, like the one Tesla announced late 2016. There are new innovations and inventions all the time, which benefits man. This will only increase in the years to come and should receive significant support and attention, like the car that runs on saltwater developed by **nanoFlowcell**. This new and highly efficient technology can be used on land, at sea, and in the air. By giving strong incentives to development and construction of airplanes and electrical ferries and

other environmentally friendly type of boats and airplanes, we can expedite the transition from fossil to renewable energy, also at sea and in the air. Today's boat traffic pollutes far more than all vehicles in the world combined. To counteract this, public transport must be cheaper and not more expensive, and free transport in cities with large rush hour traffic should be evaluated. Maybe make public transport totally free in the cities. We might tax polluting fossil power. The previous NASA scientist, and now environmentalist, James E. Hansen, is particularly concerned by this. He believes that higher taxes and fees on CO₂ and other greenhouse emissions are what it takes to put a quick stop to greenhouse emissions.

Today, polluting the nature is free of charge. It shouldn't be. Pollution is a large expense, since it inflicts both humans and nature with sufferings and damages. Not only that, but subsidies are common in many polluting industries (like the oil industry), both at home and abroad. This is something that absolutely should be stopped. Pollution, as well as other damages to nature, should be calculated in taxes and fees. If we on a deeper level don't understand that we need to stop polluting, before it eventually will hurt us all, rules, taxes, and fines etc. are needed.

Life expectancy and renewability should be stated clearly on products for sale. Just like many chose organic food, even if it's more expensive, many will surely pay extra for a product where it's stated that a certain percentage of the sale goes to environmental measures. Lifecycle cost should be stated on products that use power.

The rich countries, which have contributed the most to all the climate crises, should contribute more to the poor countries so that they can readjust faster. In addition, many of the poor countries notice more of the climate changes than the rich countries do.

There are also work to ensure legally binding agreements for reduction of emissions, that are made progressive as the years go by. And investment is needed. **The Breakthrough Energy Coalition** is committed to helping accelerate the cycle of innovation through investment, partnership, and leadership.

New, sustainable cities are under development. **Masdar City** is a

planned city project in Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates. It is going to be one of the world's most sustainable, low-carbon cities in the world. In China, there are many eco-cities where the Sino-Singapore **Tianjin Eco-city** is the most known. It aims to become a thriving city, which is socially harmonious, environmentally friendly and resource-efficient. **Songdo** is another city, a new, smart, and sustainable city which lies southwest of Seoul, South Korea. For further reading about sustainable cities and eco-cities the following might be helpful; **Ecocity Builders, Circles of Sustainability, Ecocity World Summit 2017, Next City, 100 Resilient Cities** and **Sustainable City Solutions**.

If you want more suggestions to solutions and measures that can limit the effect humans have on the environment, the book **60 SOLUTIONS against climate change** can be recommended. A free copy of the book is available on the internet. It points out 60 solutions already completed to counteract the environmental crises around the world. The GoodPlanet Foundation published the book. The Frenchman *Yann Arthus-Bertrand*, who founded The GoodPlanet Foundation, is also behind known films such as *Home* and the most recent **Human**. They have published extended versions of the film on their YouTube channel. Another film that's recommended is **Time to Choose**. The former American Vice President, **Al Gore**, has plenty of solutions and information available. Also **Saving Our Planet** offers solutions, and **The Green Optimistic**, as well as plenty of films and other information related to the environment. The free e-book **A Greener Future** is also a good read. It's written by *Sven Aake Bjoerke* and *Yannick Urs Schillinger*.

There are also many great environmental organizations and research institutions working to raise awareness about the environment, and they are also promoters of the necessary changes. Like **Greenpeace, Conservation International, The Gaia Foundation**, and **EcoWatch** just to mention a few. Celebrities like Leonardo DiCaprio also contribute through his **The Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation**. He just released the film **Before the Flood**. There are a general dawning awakening and awareness about our problems. Increased awareness is exactly what's needed to solve our problems. An awareness that transforms the deeper

layers, not only the symptoms. We will return to this later in the book.

Particularly the young have understood the problem. They have realized that today's systems will not work in the long run. They are now participating in creating countless ethical, ecological, and environmentally conscious startups worldwide. This is a very good sign, that will contribute to altering the development.

Even if we face huge changes, we are around 7.5 billion people constituting an unfathomable resource. If we join forces in finding common solutions and have the will to make use of them, there is no doubt in my mind that we will solve our problems and thereby ensure a brilliant future for generations to come.

Chapter 4

Cycles – nature's tutors

«Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.»

- Albert Einstein

Nature is built around cycles. Cycles are essential to all life. It can shortly be described as processes returning to the starting point, for then to be repeated.

Nature itself consists of cycles, which are perfectly self-perpetuating and self-regulating systems. This is reflected in many ways, for instance in the seasons, where summer is followed by autumn, then winter, which passes on to spring. This is repeated without end.

It's the same with a flower. It blooms and then forms seeds. This can clearly be seen with dandelions, which after the blooming forms a bouquet of seeds in the shape of a circle. Who has not picked one of those up from the ground on a beautiful summer day, and blown the seeds off? The dandelion withers eventually and becomes food for other living organisms, and later it will be transformed to soil. This, in turn, nurtures new flowers and other crops.

We also find cycles in countless of other systems on earth. An example is water and its creation. Water evaporates into the atmosphere, where it forms clouds. When the conditions are right, the clouds create rain which falls on earth. Life on earth depends on water to live. Nature is designed so wisely that we always receive recycled, fresh water. All

living creatures consume this. What ends up on land, will be brought back to the sea by the rivers. A fantastic system, endlessly repeated.

The earth revolves around the sun in an eternal cycle, and the seasons are created because it slopes a little to the side. In the winter, the North Pole points away from the sun, while in summer it is the opposite. Since earth also revolves around its own axis, we get night and day. The gravitation of the moon, give us the tide, which in turn brings us flow and ebb.

The blood in our body is also a form of cycle. The heart pumps the blood through the veins in the body. A network of arteries and veins transport blood rich in oxygen from the heart to the body and bring blood lacking in oxygen back to the lungs. Our breath, which is also cyclically, transports oxygen to the lungs which in turn, adds it to the bloodstream. What we breath out is called carbon dioxide (CO₂).

The large ocean currents are forms of cycles. They move through the oceans in large, cyclically currents, which branch off into smaller currents, creating circulation. This creates movement and brings cold or warm water, as well as nourishment. There are also equivalent currents in the atmosphere, with similar larger and smaller air flow.

Cycles are perpetual. Even the universe can be seen as a cycle. The Big Bang, the start of the universe, expanded it to what it is today. The universe continues to expand, but the scientists assume that it will stop at some point. The process will turn around and the universe will contract, for then to repeat the whole thing all over again.

The universe is created in a way where the small things are a copy of the larger ones. Electrons hover around the nucleus, the same way the planets are hovering around a sun.

Unlike science, where many believe that everything has occurred by chance, I believe there are a deeper meaning and intelligence behind everything. An increasing number of scientist have begun to think the same way. Nature and universe are too beautiful and grand, life is too ingeniously and amazing, and especially man and all the living is too big a miracle for everything to have happened by chance.

In earlier times, we learned to live in harmony with nature. World

understanding was cyclical. Natural communities of today, what's left of them, still lives, more or less, in harmony with nature. We have called them primitive, but we have much to learn when it comes to how they treat nature. Natural communities, which lives in harmony with nature, have a deep respect for it and harvest only what they need, otherwise, they ruin the nature's balance. They view nature as holy and spirited.

Today, modern man has lost much of its respect for nature. It makes matters worse that more or less ugly megacities are created all over the world. Here, you live in a jungle, but it's created out of asphalt and concrete. The cities have become too big, and man is cut off from nature. This also does something with the human psyche. Where can you find silence in a big city? Where are all the beautiful things that we are surrounded by in nature? Where in the big cities can you find the scent of nature, clean water, and clear air? We have got a glimpse of it in the city parks, which has had a new renaissance in the later years.

Today, we have a society based on fossil power sources, that neither are renewable nor cyclical. But things are happening. Increasingly more people have understood that we cannot continue down this road. We have become more adept at taking the principle of cycles in use. Recycling has become increasingly integrated into the structures of society. We have taken that principle from nature. Residue produced by nature never goes to waste but becomes food for other organisms. We still have a long way to go before we are a more cyclic society, but the process from a fossil society to a renewable one is well on its way.

As a society, we should break the vicious cycle based on fossil (not cyclic) sources of energy and go over to a golden circle, based on renewable (cyclic) sources of energy.

There is no reason to hurry through life. Haste makes waste, as the saying goes. If you slow down, it will be easier to enjoy life, you make fewer mistakes and think more clearly. This will make you more present in the now. A circle, which is a symbol of cycles, just is, it's timeless. Cycles are carried out at their own natural pace. Today, many of us have a job which

includes a high pace and stress, which leads to little energy at home and make us feel that we are not living a satisfactory and harmonious life. On the contrary, it will drain energy from us. Studies have shown that on their deathbed, people wish that they had worked less and used more time on things that really matters. It's not without reason that the slow movement has become popular. As Lao Tzu said:

«Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished.»

If you want to know more about the slow movements, the following two websites can be recommended; **The Slow Movement** and **The World Institute of Slowness**.

Just like a child learning to walk, from time to time falling is necessary, but it gets back on its feet and tries again, a little better each time. Humans are like a baby who falls, we make our mistakes, but we learn, we rise again and move on. As mankind, we are not learning to walk, but to live in harmony with nature's cycles and... not to forget.... In harmony with ourselves.

When we understand nature's cycles, we will also understand that everything is intertwined in incomprehensible and amazing ways. It's simple and complex at the same time. We are all in the same boat, and earth is our boat and we need to take care of it. Everything has a context and is intertwined. The whole thing is extremely intelligent, wisely, and cleverly created. It's so intelligently created, the way it is inherent in human beings, that we, by time, have the possibility and potential to manage the challenges we are facing.

Nature is incredibly adaptable. But there is a limit to how much it can take of human impact before we are in serious trouble. If we mess too much with nature, it will affect the nature's cycles which we depend on. In the end, what we do to nature, we also do to ourselves, so let's treat it with the deepest respect. To do that, more knowledge about the wisdom of nature is needed, and there is also a need for a will to use this wisdom by integrating it in our society. There are more and more signs of this, and that gives hope for the future.

Chapter 5

Human cycle

**The following inscription stands on the gravestone
of Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790):**

*Here lies the body of Benjamin Franklin, printer. Like the cover of
an old book its contents torn out, and stripped of its lettering and
gilding, lies here, food for worms. But the work shall not be wholly
lost, for it will, as he believed, appear once more, in a new and more
perfect edition, corrected and amended by the Author.*

We have just talked about cycles, showing that everything in nature is cyclic. Cycles are also something that takes place with humans. I am not thinking about the cycle of the body, that is the menstrual cycle happening once a month for fertile women. No, I think about reincarnation, in the terms of rebirth, a widespread idea in the East, where more than half of the people has this conviction. Also in the West, this is a common belief today, which has become increasingly prevalent.

It's puzzling that so many believe that only nature uses the principle of cycles. Yes, our bodies are recycled as part of a cycle (you were made from soil, and to soil, you will return), but I'm thinking of something else: our consciousness. It will not return to the soil, so to say. We go from sleeping to being awake, from being alive to die. Some even call sleeping for the little death, but we do wake up again? If all is cyclic, why don't we wake up again after the big death? What and whom wake up again after one night of sleep? Yes, that's us, our consciousness who

brings life to the body. Without consciousness, the body is just a shell. If the body no longer can be used, the consciousness will go back to where it came from before it became «a part» of the body. And now we are on a theme, that's particularly interesting and important, one that humankind has been pondering for ages. Reincarnation.

Many go through life without thinking much about the big thoughts or asking the large, existential questions before life comes closer to the end. Some of these questions might be: Who and what am I, *really*? Where do I come from? Why am I here? Did I exist before this life? Is there life after death? Am I something more than my body? What's the meaning of life? What does really matter? What is a feeling? What is fear and what is love? Why do opposites exist?

It seems like many do not think much on their own, they just follow others. If you follow a religion blindly, you don't think for yourself, you have let others think for you. The truth is deadlocked, creating favorable conditions for dogma.

It's scary if a religion or sect (religions can also be denoted as sects) goes astray. The word sect comes from the word sector, which only represents a part of a circle. In other words, a sect is just a smaller or larger part of the entirety or truth. Such a limited view might result in fundamentalism, something that doesn't lead to any good. Fear is something that plays a large part in some religions. Fear contracts and love expands.

When it comes to reincarnation, I count this as real and completely natural. If you believe that you only live one life, you will soon have problems with explaining things. Here are some questions you can reflect over:

- Why do some people only think about themselves, while others use their whole life to help other people? *Is this only due to upbringing and environment? Or can it be that all the lives contribute to our development as humans make us more empathetic?*
- Why are some people born into very different living conditions? Some are born into extreme poverty, whilst others are born into

extreme wealth?

- Why are some born sick, or with large physical or mental handicaps, while others are mentally and physically healthy?
- Why do some live very short lives? *Where is the logic? Is it all due to circumstance? Is it just bad luck?*
- Why is someone unnatural afraid of water or other phobias, while others again take no notice?
- Why do some people have near-death experiences, where many describe that they can see their physical bodies, whilst they themselves are outside it? They can describe things that happen somewhere else, like in a different room, and repeat what was said there.
- Why do some people experience déjà vu, a feeling of having been a place before, even knowing the place inside out without ever having been there before in this life?
- Why is it so that some people, also children, claims they can remember an earlier life?

If you ask me, it's more logic behind having more than one life than having just one. And if reincarnation is real, it must mean that *something* survives death. This «something» is our consciousness, what many calls the soul, and which simply can be described as a higher aspect of ourselves. It is us, but at the same time more, much more. The human life is so complex and our experiences so comprehensive, that we hardly can experience all the aspects of the human life in just one single life span. What we all want is experiencing the highest feelings, and feelings are the language of the soul.

As I see it, a human is born and then lives until the soul leaves the physical body to return to the spiritual spheres. (PS! According to feedbacks from the ones who has had near-death experiences, who are many, death is nothing to dread. On the contrary, to say it carefully.) The soul will stay here for a shorter or longer «period», depending on the soul's level of consciousness, wishes, and goals, before it again will prepare for a new reincarnation, which it helps to determine. This does

not happen indefinitely, but until the soul has learned to master the physical world, with all its aspects.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle which is based on the thought that circles are only something belonging to nature, and go over to a golden circle including an understanding that everything, also the human life, goes in circles.

If you are one who relates to science, you might frown when you read all this about reincarnation. Science has brought us amazing successes in many fields, and for that, we should be grateful. On the other hand, even science has become dogmatic. Some even say that science has become our new religion. **Rupert Sheldrake** says in his book *Science Set Free – 10 Paths to New Discovery* that underlying belief systems control scientific thinking. They base themselves on century old ideas and assumptions. Science is thus not as open and unbiased as it should have been. Some of the most important belief systems that science advocates are that all life is mechanical in its essence and that all matter is without consciousness. The point made by Sheldrake is that these beliefs are assumptions, but that they now have been taken for granted as truths. In the book, he questions these and several other dogmas found in modern science. He shows that these assumptions are not proven, there is, for instance, no evidence that life and consciousness only can be explained by physics and chemistry. Science must, in other words, acknowledge that it doesn't have the answer to everything and that some answers not necessarily are correct. Rupert Sheldrake gave a talk entitled *The Science Delusion* at TED. The talk was later taken down by TED and placed in a special corner of their website with a little more than thirty thousand viewers. Since it was «banned» it has been seen by approximately three million people. You can read the debate and watch the talk **here**.

Author **Gregg Braden** is internationally renowned as a pioneer in bridging science and spirituality. In fact, science would do humanity a great favor if they studied spiritual phenomena. Another person recommended in the field of bridging science and spirituality is **Nassim**

Haramain, who's studies has led to groundbreaking theories, published papers, and patented inventions in unified physics, which are now gaining worldwide recognition and acceptance. The movie **The Connected Universe** featuring his work and explores new understandings in science that reveal a bigger picture of interconnection than what we have ever imagined. Another movie worth mentioning is **The Creative Play of Consciousness** by producer Terje Toftenes. The movie shows that groundbreaking scientific discoveries throw new light on fundamental questions, allowing a different understanding of our universe - from the smallest quantum elements to the largest galaxies.

«The day science begins to study non-physical phenomena, it will make more progress in one decade than in all the previous centuries of its existence.»

– Nikola Tesla

Reincarnation is, for many reasons, a very important topic. If you assume that reincarnation is a reality, which consequences will that have on our view on and perception of life? You could, for instance, get a new chance to make it better in another life. This would mean that there is no hurry, life continues. This can give life a greater meaning, not everything is a coincidence. Can it also have consequences for the environment? Could you assume that we would have treated the nature differently if we knew that we would be born again sometime in the future, and thus face the consequences of our own choices from a previous life?

It's a bit of the same problem as when one has children, and I have three of them. You worry about their future, and the one for the coming generations, when you see what kind of world we have created, both environmentally and in many other ways. We would like to leave our children the world in the best possible condition. We might assume that an understanding that we probably will return to earth in the future, would reinforce this wish.

We can draw a parallel to the hippie movement, which had its peak at the end of the 60s and the beginning of the 70s. The hippie movement occurred exactly one generation after World War II and the following

baby boom. It's like reincarnated souls from that war had learned their lesson, and had had enough of war and misery caused by man (during that time there was still a war in Vietnam, to great opposition). This is speculation, but maybe something to reflect over? The hippies had, generally, long hair, as a demonstration against the short hair of the soldiers. They were often called flower children since they often had flowers in their hair as a sign of peace and harmony.

There are countless people who can remember earlier incarnations. I would claim that there are as many proofs of reincarnation as there are of the allegation that humans cause the climate changes. I mean that if research on reincarnation had received as many resources as research on climate changes, the conclusion would have been indisputable long time ago.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle based on the thought that death is the end of life and go over to a golden circle, which involves an understanding of death just being a transition to another form of life.

In the book, *Life After Death* by **Deepak Chopra**, he writes about the research done by Ian Stevenson and Carol Bowman, which both have researched children who remember earlier lives. Stevenson, who died in 2007, had a total of 3 000 cases in his archive. **Carol Bowman**, has, among other things, written a book about the topic. In his book, Deepak Chopra has a small excerpt from a child who remembers its earlier life. We include it here:

Child psychologists are aware of the existence of a critical period, usually from infancy and up to the ages of eight/ten, when some seem to remember a previous life. A new and very discussed example of this is a young boy who became obsessed about fighter planes from World War II. He wanted to visit airports to watch them, he cut out pictures of them, and when he found a book about the intense air battle above Iwo Jima at the end of the war in the Pacific, he claimed that he had died there.

The parents were very surprised by the strong conviction their boy had about this, but they expected that it was a result of great imagination, until their son arrived at

a point when he started to name people and dates. He remembered his previous name and the moment when a Japanese machine gun shot down his plane. The parents checked the event and discovered that there really had been a pilot with that name who had been shot down as described. Survivors from the Air Force could confirm the details remembered by the son.

Chopra writes in his book that children who remember a previous life are more common in India. This is because India has a general belief in reincarnation, while in the West we tend to keep such stories to ourselves.

Two other researchers on children and reincarnation it may be worth to check out are **PMH Atwater** and **Jim B. Tucker**.

In general, there are quite a few books about reincarnation today. Here is just a tiny selection: «*The children from my previous life*» by Jenny Cockell, «*Reincarnation*» by David Christie-Murray, «*Only love lasts forever*» and «*Same souls, several lives*» by **Brian L. Weiss**, «*Soul travels*» and «*The life between lives*» by **Michael Newton** and «*Your many lives*» by **Mira Kelly**.

What these books show us, is that life goes on, we get new chances and we will meet our loved ones again. Further, everything is spirited and reality is more than just our physical appearance. Seen in this light, there is a meaning to life and we get a larger understanding.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle based on the thought that nothing in the universe is spirited and go over to a golden circle, which involves an understanding that everything is spirited.

A young person has no experience, but as it gets older it would normally acquire some wisdom. It's the same way with our soul. As we have had several lives, we acquire wisdom. Just like some people are young and some are old, some souls have acquired more wisdom, understanding, and empathy than others. It's also important to clarify that everyone is equally important and valuable, it's just that we are on different levels. An adult is not more important than a child, it's just on another level. Countries also have different levels of consciousness depending on the

overall level of consciousness of the people living there.

As a society, we go through different phases, which in many cases neither serve us nor nature. Wars and conquests are examples of what we are on our way to outgrown. This is on its way to happening in other areas, like excessive material consumption in some parts of the world, mainly in the West. There are many in the West that have discovered the emptiness in this. You can, therefore, see an increasing support for alternative ways of living. These contrasts and experiences mankind have, gives us the necessary wisdom and consciousness needed to create something new, as well as new ways of working together. The goal must be to achieve the highest possible level of wisdom and growth, with the lowest possible suffering.

It is, therefore, more important than ever before for man to expand its consciousness, not only when it comes to understanding how nature works, but also how we work, spiritually, precisely because what we hold as truths have a large influence on humans, nature, and environment. As I see it, the cycle of reincarnation is an important piece in all of this.

Reincarnation shows us that there are greater things in motion. We are more connected to each other than we think. Reincarnation helps us to respect one another. We get an understanding that life has a deeper meaning. And when we do, we will also respect nature, life, and ourselves more than ever before. And we will act accordingly.

Steve Jobs was founder, chairman, and CEO of Apple, which has given the world several ground-breaking products, like iPhone. He died in 2011, after a long struggle with cancer and other health related problems. When the end came near, he invited his whole family to Palo Alto in California to bid farewell. Just before he died, he looked at everyone in his family before he glanced over his shoulder and said:

«Oh wow, Oh wow, Oh wow».

We can only speculate about what Steve Jobs saw right before he died. I am convinced that he glimpsed a piece of what was waiting for him after death. As I see it, there is no death, only transitions to another form. Such energy cannot disappear but only change form. The same way water cannot disappear but just change to steam or ice.

Invisible forms surround us. We cannot see the air that we breathe. If we move our hand fast through the air, we can feel that there's something there. The same goes for smell or heat. If you sit in front of a fire, you can feel the heat flowing towards you, but you cannot see it. It becomes even more special when you can feel the mood when you enter a room. What is this mood? It's not something you can see, only something you can feel, a kind of vibration as some calls it. We all have the possibility to feel the vibrations from others. Many have also developed a strong intuition or gut feeling. What's that and where does it come from?

Here are two institutes working with and experiencing with our consciousness like out-of-body experiences (OBE): **The Monroe Institute** and **The International Academy of Consciousness** (TIAOC). Nanci Trivellato at TIAOC held a **TEDx talk about OBE** worth watching. They also give out a free book on this subject.

It's not a good strategy to reject anything on weak grounds or prejudices. Reincarnation is met with rather large resistance from both science and religions, like Christianity. It undermines their basis. This reminds me of the statement by Arthur Schopenhauer: *«All truth goes through three stages: First it's ridiculed. Then it's met with strong opposition. At the end, it's accepted as obvious.»*

Many take today's technology for granted. We can receive TV and radio signals from all over the world, but we cannot see them. If you had mentioned this a couple of hundred years ago, you would have been looked upon as strange, and in worse case, crazy. Today, those who claim they can see into another reality and, for instance, see previously deceased people as energies, are generally looked upon as strange. But this is about to change. The same will happen with reincarnation. I believe that someday this will be regarded as natural and obvious throughout the world.

*«The human soul is like water;
From Heaven it comes
To Heaven it rises
And again descent to Earth it must –
Forever changing.»*
- Goethe

Chapter 6

The core causes of our problems

«The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.»

- Albert Einstein

Einstein nailed it with the above saying. It's our thoughts that have created the world we live in. If we want a new world, that reflects our best dreams, we must renew our thoughts. It's that simple and that difficult. To do this, we must identify the underlying thoughts that have created our dysfunctional world. In other words, we go beyond the symptoms and into the core, so that we can identify the core causes – or maybe we shall say the core thoughts. First then can we change them.

If we visit the doctor, he can tell us what's wrong with us, but not necessarily what caused the problem in the first case. If we visit the dentist, he can fix the hole in our tooth, but the reason for the hole is not fixed. If there's a fire somewhere, the firefighters can extinguish it, but it's not necessarily sure that they discover or can do something with the cause of the fire.

It's, of course, important to have society structures in place that can manage acute problems as described above. But it is obvious, that the greatest social benefit lies in preventing by finding and fixing the core causes so that the problem doesn't occur in the first place. That would save the society for huge amounts of money and, not the least, individuals for much future suffering and problems.

If a man has done something negative that has resulted in consequences for others, the wisest thing is to do something about the reason behind this negative behavior. Otherwise, the risk of repeating it is present. It's a little like an alcoholic, you can remove the bottle, but that doesn't remove the actual problem. There is a reason someone started to drink or do something criminal in the first place.

A psychologist can be a good help here. When a psychologist is looking for the cause of a problem, he will ask and dig until the cause has been found, if it's found, because there are many layers of an onion. If you find the core cause, you have an excellent opportunity to stop the problem from occurring again. Then you can break a vicious circle and create a golden circle in its place. But it's completely up to the person concerned to change.

As a society, we must break the vicious circle, where problems are solved on a symptom level, which is not lasting, and go over to a golden circle, where the problems are solved on a cause level, which is lasting.

It's all about looking deeply into things and find the real causes. And the causes are the same, whether it concerns individuals, countries, or the globe. An American author, **Neale Donald Walsch**, claims that the problems of the world cannot be solved with political, economic, or military means, even though it seems like those are the correct ones. It's our worldviews we must have a look at. It needs to be renewed.

He claims, and many with him, that the problems of the world are spiritual by nature, hence spiritual solutions are needed. In this context, our worldviews, such as belief systems (spirituality), myths, attitudes, values, convictions, and morals, are defined here as spirituality. His book, *The Storm before the Calm*, addresses this topic (by the way, **that book is free** on one of the author's websites **The Global Conversation**). But all his books touch this topic one way or the other. His series *Conversations with God (Awaken the Species - to be released early 2017)* includes several suggestions for mental and spiritual changes and how we can solve and

organize our lives in a much more sustainable way. By the way, those books are among my absolute favorites.

You can use political, economic, and military solutions (symptom), but they don't solve the underlying problems because these are spiritual by nature. And when the underlying problems are not resolved, they will continue or eventually, reappear.

Since it's very important to understand this, we will repeat it once more. In the end, the real causes, the core causes behind the ongoing conflicts, sufferings, crises, and environmental problems of man, are the view we have of the world. With that I mean the thoughts we all have regarding our basic belief systems (spirituality), myths, attitudes, values, convictions, and morals; the things we in this context define as our spirituality. The cause of the problems can be found in the deeper layers of the human psyche. These problems are based on our conscious or unconscious thought patterns. It's this deep layer which is the real and absolute essential and guiding element for how you are, act and behave in the world. And it's these thought patterns that need to be changed if we wish a world in balance, without all the problems.

We all have thoughts that create meaning and belief patterns. Everyone believe and mean something about life, if there is a greater meaning and a higher power behind it all, about themselves, about other people, about society and so on. What we believe in, we continue to our children, grandchildren, family, friends, relatives and further on to the society. That way, cultures are created. If we shall create a new culture, where the world is in balance, we must change what we believe in. We must, therefore, change our thoughts about almost everything. We need to heighten our level of consciousness, and this is where spirituality comes into play, as the deepest layer of the consciousness.

Since large parts of the world believe in a higher power, it's not surprising that the belief systems, mainly religions and sects, have had and still have, a strong influence on the different cultures. These belief systems have, especially previously, issued laws and rules about how man should behave, because this is written in their texts given to them by some «deity» or other. Thus, our moral, ethics, customs and habits etc. are formed by these religions and today everyone is, in one way or

another more or less, influenced by this. But when there's plenty of belief systems and directions, which one shall we choose? On the other hand, do we need to choose any of them? Maybe we should put more trust in our inner source, rather than basing our lives on an outer source, represented by these religions?

As a society, we should break the vicious circle where we blindly trust outer sources and go over to a golden circle where we trust our own inner source.

To repeat once again: the problems mankind faces do not exist on a political, economic, or military level, but it's exactly from this standpoint we today try to solve our problems. Since they have spiritual causes, they can only be fixed by equivalent spiritual solutions. So, what we need to look at and transform, are the belief systems of mankind, which create our convictions and our morals.

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is a typical example. They have not addressed the real, underlying causes (their old belief systems), thus the conflict is ongoing and returns repeatedly. This is something that both parties should have addresses, especially Israel, who is the strongest part and the one who exercise the most destructive power. Both sides need to be willing to respect each other and simply open their hearts to one another, like the **PeaceFactory**. This requires courage, but it's also a prerequisite for progress and solving of the deeper core causes. In a reincarnation perspective, what if a Palestinian reincarnate as an Israelite and vice versa, maybe they would look at each other differently? The primitive and old fashioned and eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth-politics (or in this case often one tooth for five others), only make the situation worse and the hate bigger. It should have been dumped long ago. As said before; Fear (and hate) contracts and love expands. Maybe we should recommend a course in love, not only for those two countries but obviously also for the rest of humanity. To read the classic *The art of Loving* by Erich Fromm could be a starting point. Also, why not learn from Japan and USA and how they became friends after being bitter

enemies during the second World War. The Japanese war machine was eradicated and the US even dropped two atomic bombs on them! Nevertheless, the Japanese didn't bear grudge against the Americans. Today, The US and Japan are friends and allies.

History shows that it can be challenging and difficult to watch and ask questions about the belief systems the current societies are built on. Even in many places today, it has almost reached a point where we cannot question them at all, because they have become untouchable truths, claimed to be given by some deity or prophet. If you chose to do so anyway, it might cause problems and you might be labeled as blasphemous, or even worse things might happen. And that's exactly what's going on.

A glaring example is the belief system of the Nazis. It was not without reason, that they forbade books with other views than themselves. To stop them from being read, they simply burned them. The Nazis were, of course, afraid that one should get other ideas or perceptions than them. Then they risked that people started to think for themselves and asked questions about the belief that the Nazis built their society on.

We should leave behind the idea that we humans know everything there is to know, that we have all knowledge and information and that we know all truths. It's better to expand our current belief systems to include new thoughts and concepts, but it is difficult and time consuming to change something that already exists. What about supporting the new, emerging spirituality? There, truth is not carved in stone. Neither is it authoritarian and you are free to think for yourself. The drawback is that the movement is not organized and therefore it currently lacks power and authority to have any significant impact.

As a society, we should go for long term solutions. The difficult way to try to create a better world is to try to change the way we behave. It's like punishing someone for doing something wrong, without addressing the underlying problems. This is a short-term solution. An example of this is the USA, which has 2,2 million of its inhabitants in jail, most of these are men (and most are black – almost six times more than white - despite they only represent 13.3 percent of the U.S. population). In

relation to the population, this is ten times as much as Norway, where I live and where there are much less crime and murder (and weapons). This clearly shows that the USA has considerably, unaddressed underlying issues.

Short-term solutions are necessary, though, for instance, to extinguish a fire, but nonetheless, it's nice to find the cause of the fire so it won't happen again. The problem with short-term solutions is that they don't solve the causes, they generally only treat a symptom which really points towards a deeper, underlying cause. For mankind, we must, therefore, go deep and focus on what we believe in, what we mean, which points of views and convictions we have. Changing this will automatically change how we behave. We are then talking about long term solutions.

An example of this is the belief that man rules the earth, and that earth in a way is subject to us and is at our disposal, for us to do with as we like. This view can be found in the Bible; in Genesis 1:28 it's written: *«God blessed them and said to them, «Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.»*

This can be understood to mean that we have free reigns. We can do whatever we want with the earth (subdue it), that is, exploit what we can. This is not exactly a form of spirituality that brings any good for earth or humans. Through the years, our pursuit of profit has not led us to treat the earth very well. It should be enough to mention overexploitation of the earth's resources. We understand that this cannot go on. If so, we would end up with the same conditions as shown in the futuristic and apocalyptic Mad Max movies, and that's not an enjoyable future.

It's great that we have organizations that are, for instance, trying to stop the extinction of the rainforest, but this will hardly permanently change our belief in ourselves as «rulers of the earth». That's why it's important to find the core causes why we humans do as we do and not just treat the symptoms. It's this type of belief system we need to change, if we want to see a permanent change.

This thought that we can do what we want with the earth, arise

because we think that we are separated from it, as well as from each other and everything else. This duality mindset gives both us and nature huge problems. What we are doing towards nature, will eventually come back to us. What we pollute the earth with, which earth is unable to break down, will end up in us. If we pollute the nature, we also pollute ourselves. If we destroy the nature, we also destroy ourselves. It's first when we have a new vision of ourselves, that everything is united, that everything is connected, that everything is spirited, that everyone is our next of kin, that all is one, that all is holy, that we are not separated from nature, other people, or all other life, all that exists, first then there is hope, then we are on our way to where we want to go!

In 2016, a book by the Danish writer Jens André Herbener was published. The book's English title would be *nature is sacred – climate disaster and religion*. The book points out that there is a connection between the climate problems and what we believe in. Here is an excerpt of the book, that discusses the influence of monotheist religions, in this case, Christianity:

«There is something depressing about watching Christian missionaries educate pygmies and Hottentots that God doesn't exist in the woods, that the spirit of God is not present in the haze of dawn, the current of the river or in the scream of the hyena.»

These anxious words about ecclesial mission, are written by a Lecturer at the University of Roskilde, Ph.D. Aksel Haaning, a specialist in natural philosophy.

Further, it says: *The church fathers' rejection of nature's divinity inevitably led to a downgrading of it. It got a whole Flood of consequences. Firstly, Christian missionaries ruined, to a great extent, pre-Christian holy forests and trees, even if they were hundreds or thousands of years old.*

Secondly, the Christians saw nature as an obstacle humans needed to conquer to get to their heavenly homeland. Humans on earth were only «pilgrims». The paradisiacal end of the commandment lay with God, outside the world. According to Haaning the seed to the mechanical worldview is to be found in all this. He describes it as «the crowning achievement, a fulfillment of a basic Christian project, namely draining nature of spirit...»

The growth of natural science during the 16-1700 century is not in contrast to Christian thinking. It has developed from it. Some of its most important founders,

René Descartes, and Isaac Newton regarded themselves as Christians and the mechanical worldview as Christian. Thus, Christianity has delivered some of the crucial mentality historic conditions of possibilities for the modern exploitation of nature. And thus, also for the global climate crises of today.

Christianity is developing (thank God!) and more people in this religion understands the gravity of the environmental problems today. Pope Francis stated not long ago that our present ecological crisis is the sign of a cultural pathology; «We have come to see ourselves as the lords and masters of the Earth, entitled to plunder her at will. The sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life are symptoms that reflect the violence present in our hearts. We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the Earth; that we breathe her air and receive life from her waters.»

As a society, we should break the vicious circle based on a separating, dogmatic, and narrow-minded spirituality and go over to a golden circle, involving a unifying, open, including and loving spirituality.

We humans have repeated our problems for hundreds of years without getting particularly longer. This is because we have tried to solve our problems based on what we see on the «surface». We have not gone into the «deeper layers» to find the real causes. Narcotics and other drugs are still a huge problem, there are still wars going on, prostitution is still widespread, and there are still poverty and hunger and so on. Albert Einstein understood this very clearly, and I here bring yet another quote from him that pinpoints what has just been discussed:

«No problems can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.»

The world's religions have great things to contribute with, but at the same time, they also have doctrines, which advantageously should have been abolished. For instance, the doctrine that we are separate (humans are separated from each other and the divine is «over there» while we are «here»). Something else that advantageously should have been abolished

is the mindset that our religion is right (our way is the only right way) and the faith in an angry, jealous and punishing God, who condone when violence is used as a conflict resolution. It's not difficult to understand that in this case, we have created God in our image.

When we have forgotten to think for ourselves and let religions and sects govern our mind and choices, it might lead us in the wrong direction. It's also a form of brainwashing and delusion. The original intention behind the teachings might have been good, but the messages have throughout the centuries been diluted and distorted by selfish and power-hungry people, mainly men. Jesus was not the founder of Christianity as a religion, this was founded a long time afterward by someone else.

That homosexuality is a sin, and that women are worth less than men are glaring examples based on old, outdated, wrong teachings. Religions create atheists and agnostics on a conveyor belt, and I think it's completely understandable. Think for yourself, is a good advice. But be open to the thought that there are more between heaven and earth, and that we still only know a little. This is despite all the scientific insights made during the last centuries. The universe is so beautifully created, that there is no reason huge, spiritual truths and worlds/dimensions beyond ours, are not equal to or, as I see it, even more amazing and grand than they are in our reality.

A transformation starts from within and works its way out. It's not without reason it's been said that to change the world you must start with yourself. And in a way, this is what is about to happen. Quite a few people look at themselves, each other, and the world in general in a new way. This is really something to support! Because, when we humans change our outdated belief systems and convictions, we also change the way we behave. We will create new, creative ways of living and we will behave in a more loving manner towards each other and all living creatures. Then we will see a whole new world emerge in the horizon.

As I see it we are immortal. We have been alive forever. We are part of a natural life system, which «recycle» itself endlessly. This natural life system, or life itself, is the very same thing which many call God, and

that some call universe or other call all that is. In other words, God/Life/Universe, are not something that's outside us, but *in* us. We are all miniature Gods, creative beings, and equal aspects of all that exists. We *are* life itself and at the same time, we are those who *experience* life. *In other words, we are literally God, who explores and expands itself through us, thus through you and me.* That's also why it's said that you don't have to look for God outside yourself, you find everything inside of you, and that's because you *are* an aspect of what many call God. It's like a hologram. Each point in the hologram contains information about the entire photographed object.

For my part, it's the so-called near-death experiences which have opened my eyes towards a greater understanding. I mention it, because this might be a door opener for others as well. I personally know several people who have had such experiences and I have talked to them about it. I learned that death doesn't really exist and It's absolutely nothing to be afraid of. It's only a transition to another existence. An existence we deliberately choose to forget when we were born into this world we now live in. At the transition back to the existence we had before we were born (often called Heaven), we go from forgetting to remembering again. Not only will you meet your loved ones again, but you will also be able to leave your heavy burdens, in the form of worries, illnesses, and limitations, behind. Not to understand that the life we live here and now is a vale of tears that we are forced to live in, far from it. We have voluntarily chosen to be here. Not only to grow, but also to live and enjoy the beautiful, physical existence. It's easier to achieve a complete understanding of, as well as the meaning behind, our physical existence and the gifts it brings us, when we have returned to the other side.

My skepticism when I started to study all these phenomena a long time ago, made me systematically read plenty of books about it. I read books by those who researched the phenomena and even more books about personal experiences. I consciously choose persons from different layers of society, as well as cultures. Thus, a much clearer picture, with lots of similarities, started to be drawn. An example is that you undergo the life that you have just lived (life review), and for that reason, you

understand on a deeper level the consequences of your thoughts, words and actions and what consequences this have brought to others. In this phase, you are, in fact, *one with* the others. That way you notice (to a certain extent) for better or worse the feelings you have inflicted on others. This is because, in the ultimate reality, you also *are* the other person. An image of that is the cells that are a part of you, in the same way that you also are a part of something bigger. Another example is what you experience just after the transition. A great part of the experiences in this phase are colored by cultural, religious, or other belief systems, which you are a part of. It's unique for each one and the variations of the experience are endless. If you strongly believe in Jesus or Buddha, it's possible that you will be met by a figure of light with the same shape. Near-death experiences are already at this point teaching us something important. Firstly, our physical body is not who we really are, but something we have and that we temporarily possess. Second, neither are we our thoughts, meaning our mind. What we believe shape our experiences shortly after death, because that's what's on our minds. From our life on earth, we carry with us a large bundle of more or less truthful perceptions and belief systems which will be decoded (with the help of entities from the other side) in our own pace. It's actually a re-identification of who you are. You will again remember who you really are deep inside. When you do, your experiences will not be decided by what you believe but, as I have understood, your wishes.

Further, these experiences taught me (together with meetings and conversations with other who have had such experiences) that we live in a world of contrasts, a major reason we are growing as humans and souls. When we have reached a certain level in our development, contrasts are no longer that important, as I have understood it. In the world we are in now, we have been separated (this separation is actually an illusion) from the unity, we all come from. In death, we go from separation back to unity with everything and everyone (except the ones holding themselves temporarily back – earthbound - of various reasons depending on their mindset – like not believing in a life after death). Also in this world are we one with everything and everyone, we have just not yet learned and

understood it, and that's some of the points with our journey here on earth. It can all be said to be a recollection process. And you are totally and unconditionally loved! No exception whatsoever! If people really knew how unbelievably loved they all are, all the problems of the world would be vanishing pretty fast. In the hereafter, there are no contrasts, quite contrarily, everything is connected in an ocean of love. It's not without reason it's called heaven. Our job here is not to get to heaven (our world and everything created in our universe/ multiverse, are already a part of this «heaven»), but to create it (bring heaven down) here on earth.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross was a pioneer in near-death studies. She was the author of the groundbreaking book *On Death and Dying* from 1969. Here are a couple of relatively new books that are recommended for those who want to take a closer look at near-death experiences:

Dying to be me by **Anita Moorjani**. A strong history, that also says something about the meaning of life and gives us insight into her process from illness to healing.

Proof of Heaven and *The Map of Heaven* by **Eben Alexander**. As a neurosurgeon, he based himself on science and believed that near-death experiences were only imagination. After seven days in coma, he could tell another and amazing history.

The Self Does Not Die by Titus Rivas, Anna Dirven, and Rudolf H. Smit. They have gone to great lengths to objectively analyze 104 cases of veridical perception during near-death experiences.

Recommended websites about these experiences are **International Association for Near-Death Studies** and **Near Death Experience Research Foundation**.

Belief systems and religions also create so much suffering and misery for both humans and nature, so this is something we must address and confront. Just see the documentary *Religulous* by Bill Mahler, which currently you will find on Netflix. It shows how extreme religions and belief systems can be. Or you can watch the thriller movie *The Da Vinci Code* who deals with secrecy and manipulation in Christianity. Another one is the new Russian drama film *The Student*. The plot revolves around

a young man who has become a religious fanatic whose behavior gradually has an impact on his environment and the whole school which eventually leads to disaster.

Old religions belong to another time, people, values, and way of life. To lean on them are to go backward, not forward. To create greater understanding, respect and harmony between religions is a fine thing, and the organization **The Parliament of the World's Religions** are working with this. The same goes for **United Religions Initiative**. You can, of course, work to change them, that's possible but demanding. If we don't challenge these belief systems, they will challenge us! And they do that already. We see this in certain actions of terror, like the one in Paris in 2015, Nice, Turkey, and Berlin in 2016 and many others around the world. In our time, there is much talk about terrorism, but in the end, it's not other humans terrorizing us, but our own convictions.

It all boils down to changing what people believe in, and not so much what they do. Because what we do is based on what we believe in, and that's what's need to change. When the core in our spirituality is that we are each other's brother and sisters, that what we do to each other we also do to ourselves, that we all are one, that our lives have room for forgiveness, accept, tolerance, openness, unity, community, and love, and this is followed in practice, everything on our planet will change. Economical differences will disappear, exploitation of nature and humans will stop, and so on. This way, we have the possibility to arrive where we all dream about arriving: a world with unlimited peace, creativity, happiness, love, harmony, and celebration of life.

Chapter 7

Human and natural balance

«We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.»

- Chief Seattle

How can we get a balance in human society, that gives everyone a good life? Rudolf Steiner, who founded Anthroposophy, can contribute. He meant that in an enlightened and civilized society, there will exist a natural development in three areas:

Economy, Politics, and Culture.

These areas of society should be given equal importance and sufficient independence. First then, society will work in harmony. None of these three areas should dominate the other ones.

The problem is that, in large parts of the world, this is exactly what has happened. Here are some examples:

- Economy: In the USA, the economic area has dominance over the other two. Materialistic capitalism has a strong influence on American politics by, for instance, an extensive use of lobbying. It also has a strong influence on the culture.
- Politics: Communism (The Soviet Union) where the state (the politics) had dominance over the economic and cultural area.

- Culture: In many countries in the Middle East, like Saudi-Arabia, the cultural area (in the shape of religion) dominate the economic area as well as the political area.

We can see that's it not good when some of these areas of community organization dominate the others. In Norway, they have more or less separated the state from the church (religion). Both to prevent a specific religious influence on the other areas, but also because it is obvious that one specific religion should not have precedence over other religions and beliefs. Moreover, it's unfortunate that religions are intertwined with the state at all, since they are based on distinctive rules and dogma.

The USA is not the only place where economics dominates the other two areas. In most of the world, the economic aspect has also gotten a more prominent place the last decades. This has made nature suffer for the benefit of profit. The same applies to the cultural, spiritual, and social aspects of human life. The optimum must be a form of balance between these three areas of society, like Steiner initially proposed. Then we would have a possibility to create a human society in balance.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle where some of the three areas (economy, politics, and culture) dominate and go over to a golden circle, where these areas are in balance.

When there are turbulent, chaotic, and difficult times in the society, one often demands a so-called strong leader and one does not want more of the same (like Hillary Clinton in the USA). This might result in the emergence of extreme right forces, like President Trump in the USA, Rodrigo Duterte, who is President of the Philippines and Viktor Orbán, Hungary's prime minister. More of that kind might appear *temporarily* on the world stage in the times to come, before the pendulum swings back. Finally, the pendulum swings less and less until we achieve balance. A focus based on simple solutions, anger, and fear, like these forces use (talking directly to those struggling, blaming their problems on others, xenophobia and so on), closes both heart and mind and gives our real

essence (the soul) bad conditions. If we have a focus based on love, for instance, seeing and understanding the perspective of others without prejudice, you promote the essence of the soul and opens both heart and mind.

To create a world free of unnecessary problems and crises made by humans, we also depend on creating a balance between humans and nature. Nature people has already done it. We can learn from them, and transfer their knowledge to our modern society. We can also employ the principle of nature, so ingeniously shown in the principles of cycles.

I am not a strong believer in reducing our consumption of energy and return to the caveman stage. The way the world is organized today, I see great benefits with reducing our energy consumption, since much of it is based on fossil sources. But in the future, when the power sources are increasingly renewable or based on free energy, we can use as much energy as we like. The question is if it's necessary and if it contributes to increasing the quality of life?

I am certain that we soon will have access to unlimited energy. I am also certain that mankind by that time has become more mature, so that unnecessary use of energy doesn't exist. Nature is an expert on this. For instance, the small migratory bird, Sedge Warbler, flies from Norway to Africa for the winter. It can fly around 4 000 km without any break. It has even been claimed that it can fly all the way to Africa without break. At the start of its journey, it weighs 23 grams and only 9 grams upon arrival.

On the other hand, I am a greater supporter of reduced material consumption, both now and in the future. The consumption of today is too big in developed countries. We don't need to reduce it to that extent that our quality of life decreases, but we need to bring it in balance as intended by nature. Then more people would be able to share in the goods. There are enough of everything for everyone. It's just a question about sharing the goods and find ways of doing so. When you own less stuff you got more time.

Wealth, material possessions, and consumption don't bring lasting happiness. Your quality of life will not decrease by not owning a

luxurious yacht. I would say that owning a luxurious yacht is more a sign of a large ego. If you would like to cruise around in a boat like that, a solution might be to own such a boat together with others. Then you can take turn in using it, for instance, a week at the time. Or simply rent such a boat. This would be a better economic use of the boats (and other of our possessions), which most of the time are unused. This way, more people can benefit from them.

You can be ever so rich and famous, but without friends and someone or something to share that with, your life will eventually be shallow. You are also at the risk of being owned by your possessions. Then you are suddenly not so free anymore. What kind of freedom do you have, if you worry about your possessions all the time, use most of your free time on them instead of something that matters?

You often see fewer smiles on the faces of people in the West than on people in poorer countries. Why do they seem so happy and content? How can it be possible when they are far from as rich as us in the Western world? One thing we can confirm is that happiness cannot be bought. Quite a few have already discovered this. Happiness comes from within, not from outer sources. It's a little like love and sex. You can buy sex, but you cannot buy love.

In the Norwegian book, *Seeds of the future – seeds to a better world*, which Vidar-Rune Synnevaag and Rolf Erik Solheim was editors for, Solheim writes the following about outer (materialistic) values and inner (ethical) values:

Our values and attitudes are forming our social identity... In turn, these govern our actions and behavior, what we write and what we say...

The outer values are about status and asserting oneself. People with strong outer values fixates on how others see them and prefer to be rich and famous. Inner values are about friendship, family, community, about peace of mind and confidence. People with strong inner values is not, to the same degree as others, dependent on praise and approval from others. People with inner values have perceptions beyond pure self-interest.

Most individuals have a combination of outer and inner values. Research from over 70 countries shows a specific pattern: financial success is often related to lower

compassion, stronger ability to manipulate, an orientation towards hierarchy and inequality, strong prejudice against foreigners, and a decreased ability to pay attention to human rights and environment. Individuals with a strong confidence, often have more empathy and are more concerned about human rights, environment, and distribution of social benefits. But there is a conflict between inner and outer values, and they are pushing each other aside. This means that the stronger the outer motives are, the weaker the inner values get.

It's not the facts which are determinant of our actions, but our attitudes and values. Our decisions will therefore to a lesser extent be determined by facts, those which so often are overrun by our values. If you have strong outer values, no amount of facts about environment or climate will be of any help.

You can compare former president of USA, Obama, with the current president Trump and see who fits the description of the excerpt above. Also, I feel the last paragraph can be related to the American presidential election of 2016. No matter the facts presented, which rejected many statements made by Trump, it didn't help much.

Common Cause Foundation says about themselves that they are *a network of people who work to rebalance cultural values to create a more just, sustainable, and democratic society*. They mean that there exist plenty of proof that the balance of different values has a significant influence when it comes to shaping the social and environmental behavior. Further, they believe that a long lasting and proportional response to today's social and environmental challenges demands that compassionate values are prioritized over selfish motives.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle where outer values dominate and go over to a golden circle, where there is a balance between inner and outer values.

We should manage this world the best way possible. Thus, we cannot overexploit the natural resources. We tend to focus on short-term gain. The problem is that this often leads to a long-term loss for both humans and nature. Maybe we in the future will be named as the short-term generation?

Nature has already solved plenty of the issues that we struggle with. I do not rule at that it can solve most of our problems, if we just look hard enough. An example: Fungus and mycelium (the part of the real body of the fungus which forms networks below the ground) have extraordinary characteristics. They can clean toxic waste, absorb oil, contribute to new medicine and plenty of other stuff. The mycelium researcher **Paul Stamets**, claims that they even can absorb radioactive radiation. Students at the University of Yale, USA, have found a fungus in the Amazonas, which eats polyurethane plastic. Further research has been done on this, also at the University of Utrecht and Livin Studio. They have managed to produce a fungus which can break down plastic and transform it to an edible biomass.

Biomimetics is a relatively new science. It can briefly be described as innovations inspired by nature. Throughout millions of years, nature has come up with the best of ideas. Animals, plants, and microbes are quintessential engineers. Nature is extremely creative. After billions of years with research and development it has had enough time and opportunity to try and fail, fine-tune and perfect. Humans have already been inspired by nature in so many areas, especially when it comes to design, architecture, and mechanical devices. As a society, we could learn from nature in other areas as well. There is no doubt that nature still has secrets waiting to be discovered and used by us. **AskNature** is an organization working to inform about biomimicry. They have the world's most comprehensive catalog of nature's solutions to human challenges, especially when it comes to design.

The Indians only harvested what they needed. When they killed animals, they thanked the spirit of the animal for what was given to them. They didn't only use the meat for food, they also took care of the skin, which they used for many purposes. Of course, not everything the Indians did was good, like the brutal wars they had against each other, but they lived in balance with nature and treated it with deep respect.

The city of Seattle in the state of Washington, USA, is named after Chief Seattle. In 1854 he held a speech because the white man wanted to buy land from them. Chief Seattle didn't speak English; therefore,

notes were taken of parts of his speech. The speech was held in a local Indian tribal language. It was then translated into another Indian language before it was translated into English. In 1887, the speech was published in a local newspaper by Dr. Henry A. Smith, based on the notes he took when Chief Seattle held his speech. Before he published the speech, he consulted with several elder Indians from various tribes (Chief Seattle was no longer alive), so the essence of what the Indians wanted to convey is probably kept in the speech. Since then, the speech has been changed and modified several times. It would therefore not be correct to say that Chief Seattle was the writer of the current text. I have decided to include parts of it, as it so excellent and beautiful describes many of the points I have been trying to make. The most known version is compiled by a Texas professor, Ted Perry, in relation to a film project in 1972. And who knows if not Chief Seattle had a certain influence on Terry from the happy hunting grounds when he worked on revising the speech? Make up your own mind.

Who owns the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water?

The Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. The Great Chief also sends us words of friendship and goodwill. This is kind of him since we know he has little need of our friendship in return. But we will consider your offer. For we know that if we do not sell, the white man may come with guns and take our land. What Chief Seattle says, the Great Chief in Washington can count on as truly as our white brothers can count on the return of the seasons. My words are like the stars. They do not set.

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them from us? We will decide in our time. Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing,

and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people.

We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother but his enemy, and when he has conquered it he moves on. He leaves his father's graves behind, and he does not care. He kidnaps the earth from his children, and he does not care. His father's grave and his children's birthright are forgotten. He treats his mother, the earth, and his brother, the sky, as things to be bought, plundered, sold like sheep or bright beads. His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only a desert.

There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No place to hear the unfurling of leaves in spring or the rustle of insect's wings. But perhaps it is because I am a savage and do not understand. The clatter only seems to insult the ears. And what is there to life if a man cannot hear the lonely cry of the whip-poor-will or the arguments of the frogs around a pond at night? I am a red man and do not understand. The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of a pond, and the smell of the wind itself, cleansed by a midday rain, or scented with pinon pine. The air is precious to the red man, for all things share the same breath — the beast, the tree, the man, they all share the same breath. The white man does not seem to notice the air he breathes. Like a dying man, he is numb to the stench.

If we decide to accept, I will make one condition; the white man must treat the beasts of this land as his brothers. I am a savage and do not understand any other way. I have seen a thousand rotting buffaloes on the prairie, left by the white man who shot them from a passing train. I am a savage and do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo that we kill only to stay alive. What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, man would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts, soon happens to man. All things are connected.

One thing we know. Our God is the same God. To harm the earth is to heap contempt on its Creator. The whites too shall pass; perhaps

sooner than all other tribes. Continue to contaminate your bed, and you will one night suffocate in your own waste. When the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses are tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy with the scent of many men, and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires. Where is the thicket? Gone. Where is the eagle? Gone. And what is it to say goodbye to the swift pony and the hunt? The end of living and the beginning of survival.

The white man's dreams are hidden from us. And because they are hidden, we will go our own way. For above all else, we cherish the right of each man to live as he wishes, however different from his brothers. If we agree, it will be to secure the reservation you have promised. There, perhaps, we may live out our brief days as we wish. When the last red man has vanished from this earth, and his memory is only the shade of a cloud moving across the prairie, these shores and forests will still hold the spirits of my people. For they love this earth as the newborn loves its mother's heartbeat.

If we sell you our land, love it as we've loved it.

Chapter 8

Masculine and feminine balance

«Just as a bird needs two wings to fly, a society needs women and men leading together to evolve to a higher level.»

- Michelle Bachelet

Today, there are many imbalances in the world. An example of this is the imbalance between masculine and feminine. It's especially the masculine which is dominating and that is clearly reflected in today's society. In many places, women are not regarded as of equal value and in too many cases they are regarded as a commodity. Women's sexuality sells, and the profit goes to men. Another example is how typical female occupations are considered of little worth, as the pay is lower than in male-dominated occupations. Men often work in private sector, whereas women often work in public sector within areas such as healthcare and education. Many have part-time (and low paid) jobs because of children. By the way, raising children have not been regarded as something that should be paid for, if women (or men) choose to stay home with their small children. Shouldn't raise our children be regarded as one of the most important tasks? Our next generation? We have all been small children, in case some have forgotten.

The dominating masculinity can be clearly seen in large cities. You don't need much fantasy to see what skyscrapers represent. The same could be said about church spires, pointing to the sky as a masculine

phallus. Christianity has been a male dominated religion, just like Islam. The fact that women, throughout Western history, has not been regarded as equal to men is very discriminating, and must be attributed to the outdated and old fashioned teachings of the church. Again, this goes to show how important our belief systems are. They are usually in the background, pulling the strings.

If we want to see some changes in this world, we need to look at and do something with these belief systems. As already discussed in a previous chapter, our spirituality (which the belief systems are a part of) is a core cause of the problems we are struggling with. The excerpts below point this out, they are collected from the New Testament in the Bible:

«Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, just as Christ is head of the church...

Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.»

This excerpt is from the Ephesians 5, 22-24. We continue with another one:

«A man ought not to cover his head since he is the image and glory of God; For man did not come from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man...»

This is from 1 Corinthians 11, 7-9.

Even today, in Norway, we still notice some aftershocks of these discriminatory statements, even if they are almost 2 000 years old. They have been glued to our minds, and it has been difficult to get rid of them. Fortunately, much has happened in the church, since it now allows both male and female priests and bishops (in Norway notably). But how much have women suffered throughout the years? And who has written the Bible? Yes, men. Does someone see a connection here?

Other countries around the world are far behind. In the new, Iranian national assembly there are now 18 women (May 2016). This is a progress since the last election, but the imbalance is significant when the rest of the elected (a total of 290) are men. This belief in the superiority of men, which does not reflect reality, has led to men feeling more

valuable and better than women. Women have not been regarded as fit for high positions within religion, politics, or business. There is no doubt that what we believe in creates our reality. Fortunately, belief systems can be changed, they are renewable.

It's not difficult to find statements in the Bible just as bad or worse than these, and surely also in Islam, Hinduism or other religions. The danger arises when people take such statements literally because they believe they come directly from some deity. Such distorted statements are to blame for the fact that women, homosexuals, lesbian and other individuals who don't fit the norm, have been oppressed and discriminated against. It's almost incomprehensible that God is made so petty, and it's even more incomprehensible that people believe in it. It's time to realize that this is us creating God in our image! There are, in fact, several thousands of larger and smaller belief systems in the world. *Everyone* has created their own image of God or reality and it's therefore not surprising that there are so many belief systems. To claim that my religion is the only right one, that my people are God's chosen people, is arrogant and has many times led to wars and conflicts. But, everyone is doing what's right according to their worldview.

All humans contain both masculine and feminine powers. Some have integrated these powers in a balanced way, others, whether they are men or women, have imbalance in one end or the other. As I see it, all of us have had lives as both men and women. How balanced we are in our masculine and feminine powers, depends on how well we integrated these powers in our previous lives.

I see it as possible, that one of the main causes of homosexuality or lesbian tendencies, might be that their last lives were, for example, as a man. When you start experiencing and living life as a woman, the old, natural tendencies where you searched for women make you interested in women, even if you are a woman yourself. There is nothing wrong with that, if everything happens out of free will and love has free rain and the relationship is of equal joy. This applies regardless of the relationship in question. Maybe this can be a reason some people want to change their gender because they feel more comfortable with the

other gender? But this is a vast topic, and the causes can be several, like having a soul that only want to explore new limits and aspects of themselves or feel how it is to be a human being that is different (and there is much to choose from, like being bisexual or transgender).

This world has, for too long, been ruled by hunger for power, and by selfish people, mainly men. There have been countless wars throughout history. There have not been many women who have overseen those. On the other side, there have probably been some women who have incited and manipulated their men. So, they have not been entire without influence. Statistics from a longer period, as mentioned earlier, has shown that the number of wars is decreasing, with some exceptions (no war was started in 2016 for example). Some of this might be since more women have come into power, but also because humans have increased their masculine and feminine balance. This is something that happens naturally since we have had several lives, which in turn have given us enough experience to quit immature things like wars. We have evolved.

It's important to look deeper inside the history of a matriarchal society (ruled by women) and a patriarchal society (ruled by men). This can tell us much about when, how, and why men gradually gained importance at the expense of women. Almost all societies in the world today are patriarchal. Archeological excavations show that matriarchal cultures have existed. In those societies, they worshiped the goddess and it was women who reigned. On Malta and Crete, they have not found objects related to violence or war, and it is assumed that there have been cultures there which have lived peacefully side by side for a longer period. The archeologist **Marija Gimbutas**, claims to prove that these societies, which existed in ancient Europe several thousands of years ago, lived in peace. Helped by excavations and research, Gimbutas found that societies living in peace for several thousand years had existed in ancient Europe, and their highest deity was feminine.

In the past, men conquered by the help of wars to be great and powerful. Resulting in immense sufferings. Today, this is regarded as condemnable, something done by despots, dictators, and tyrants, so this has not as good living conditions as before.

Today men mainly conquer markets with the help of profit, without much thought about the consequences to humans or environment. In the future, this will also be regarded as condemnable and they will wonder about what we did. Fortunately, there are quite a few people who already has understood this. The situation *is* about to better.

Right now, the world could use more femininity, as softness, care, and empathy, to counterbalance the cold macho society we have created. We can use the male vigor, the impulsive and creative, but also the female receptivity, the preserving, keeping and nurturing. You can do much yourself to bring these two equal powers into balance (if you feel there are an imbalance one way or the other). Note that this doesn't need to be gender related. A feminine man may benefit from working on his masculinity and a masculine woman may benefit from working on her femininity. If you are conscious about your own patterns and imbalances on this field, and others for that matter, you have a greater possibility of changing them. But, we are, for the most part, dependent on others to see this and thus, to develop. So, relationships to others, despite their form, may work as a mirror and are an excellent way to grow. In fact, some friends of mine call, for fun, their relationship partners for free therapists.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle, where masculinity dominates, and go over to a golden circle where there is a balance between the masculine and the feminine.

Regarding architecture, we can see a displacement towards a more humane direction, where circles and other soft forms have been taken into use all over the world. Greater emphasis is made on creating beauty and more humane surroundings, like parks. It is enrichening to be in beautiful surroundings. All this is another sign, and a visible sign, that the feminine is advancing.

The skyscrapers, on the other side, are more masculine and hierarchical, and staying at the top of the skyscraper is the best. It's almost like the more male dominated a society are, the more it needs to

be regarded as great and powerful, and the higher the skyscrapers get. But as already mentioned, this is about to turn, at least in many western countries. An example is the new main offices of Apple in California. The whole massive building is shaped like a giant circle. It will be interesting to see if Apple, one of the richest companies in the world, will show more responsibility for the community in the future. By the way, Apple reminds me of Uncle Scrooge and his «Money Bin». They could have given higher wages to their workers in China. Their business partners could have got more money on condition that their workers get higher wages. At least, they have become better at protecting the environment.

According to **The Global Gender Gap Report 2016**, Iceland is topping the list of countries with the highest gender equality, based on economics, education, health, and political indicators. Most other Nordic countries are also high on the list (Finland, Norway, Sweden), just behind Iceland. It has not always been like that. The women in Iceland and other countries have fought for their rights, where those in power, men, didn't easily want to let go of their privileges. One day in October 1974, 90 % of the women on Iceland went on strike and paralyzed the country completely. One of the reasons for the strike, was the fact that they were lesser paid than men, just because they were women. They refused to do domestic chores, left their homes and their jobs, and made men realize their importance. Four years later, Iceland had the first female president of the world. There is still not complete gender equality (the women on Iceland went on strike again in 2010). And recently we had **The Women's March** immediately following Donald Trump inauguration as President of the United States in January 2017. Over 5 Million worldwide participated and over 1 Million in Washington, D.C. This shows that there is still a way to go but the trend is that things are improving.

Isn't it conspicuously that the countries in the world with the highest degree of gender equality, like the Nordic countries, also are among the countries best to live in? Many countries use the Nordic countries as a model for an ideal society. It's a way to go before it's an ideal society (we

have, for instance, lost some of the ability to take care of each other), but mostly it is far better than many other countries.

The Nordic countries have long traditions for more equalities between the genders than other countries. During the times of the Vikings, the women held strong positions and had more rights than other women in Europe. They could, among other things, be «volver», which is a kind of priestess or shaman, and they could perform special magical rites. Some of the reason might be that they had larger responsibilities and had to reign since the men were traveling (or maybe I should say conquering and plundering). The Norse mythology also has plenty of women. The mentality we have brought with us since then has probably been rooted deep within and thus hard to get rid of, something Christianity tried when it came North. They only partially succeeded, but now the tide has turned. Feminine values are advancing (except for some temporary setbacks here and there). And that's good. Because imbalance between the feminine and the masculine gives us trouble, something both today's society, as well as history, have shown us. The advancement of femininity means that there will be a better balance between the feminine and the masculine, a kinder society, and we are, therefore, walking towards a brighter future.

Chapter 9

Create more happiness, joy, and better health

«What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: Our life is the creation of our mind.»

- Dhammapada

Today, it's quite common that people have a lot of health-related issues, both physically and mentally. It has come to almost epidemic conditions. It doesn't need to be this way. People also got sick in the past, and they lived shorter lives, but today better hygiene, less poverty, higher living conditions, shorter working hours, better diets, and development within medical science have, together with other things, increased our lifetime with many years. And as we get to live longer, the risk for health problems also increases.

In addition, there are new elements present. Suspect additives in food, a more passive lifestyle where body and mind don't get enough stimulation, and we are exposed to radiation in buildings, as well as outside. Pollution that, among other things, causes a poorer quality of water and air. Since these changes have been going on over the course of several years, you don't think much about it unless there is a dramatically change for the worse.

When we observe all the problems the world struggles with, you can

in a way say that society is sick. And when the society is sick, we get sick. Not because we don't control our own health, but because we get carried away with the collective streams of the society. And there are plenty of those; we eat junk food and in turn get obesity issues, we consume negative news and risk to be depressed about the world and life. The society's focus on the superficial life, represented by junk media, results in plenty of people not finding a deeper meaning to life and misunderstands what really matters. Too much focus on outer beauty and too little on inner beauty results in many people struggling with their self-worth. And there is an overload of conflicting and false information. A lack of community feeling and inclusion make way for conflicts and make people lonely, something that shortens life and makes it difficult to find happiness and joy.

If we had solved many of the problems in the society, both people's physical and mental health would have been significantly better. Joy and happiness of life would have increased. Everything is connected.

The good news is that all of us, on an individual level, have the possibility and the power to heal ourselves, even though the society is «sick». At the end, we are the ones who are responsible for our own health, which means that we have the power to turn the trend. We have the choice. We understand that we create lifestyle diseases. We know that physical inactivity - lack of exercise – leads to health issues, and we know that some of the things we add to our bodies also lead to health issues. Examples of these things are tobacco, alcohol, drugs, too much sugar and salt, unhealthy food and too much red meat etc. Today, there are also plenty of additives in the food, as well as residue of pesticides on both fruit and vegetables. Eventually, it would be better for our bodies if we changed to cleaner food, like organic, and used less processed food. There are also more nutrients and vitamins in organic food compared to processed food. **EAT Foundation** is working to improve the food system of the world and put it into a more sustainable direction.

Something that in my opinion is even more important for our health, is our states of mind. Said with other words; our consciousness has the largest influence, not only over our health but also over the happiness

and joy we feel in our lives. You can eat healthy, be vegetarian and exercise as much as you wish. You can then be physically fit, but if you lack self-worth and self-love or are fearful, you can still attract sickness to yourselves. Are you exercising and eating healthy out of fear for getting any sickness in the future or out of joy and wellbeing? Always try to do it out of love, joy, and wellbeing for yourself.

Our conscious and subconscious thoughts and feelings have a huge influence on us. An example is that you can sabotage your own happiness by letting old, negative events from the past still influence your life today. If you wear a grudge towards someone or are fearful, it's more difficult to give room for happiness and joy and easier to let sickness in. What you feel is, in fact, a choice. There is no point in holding a grudge, eventually, the universe will set things straight. I don't say it's easy, but we have the power to train ourselves to change the focus of our thoughts. The more you can get rid of fear and old grudges (or other similar things whirling around in your subconscious mind), the freer and lighter your mind will be. And since everything is connected, joy and happiness will increase and your health will improve.

What causes worries and negative feelings might as well be deeply rooted patterns of habit and the fact that our minds are filled with old thoughts and rubbish from the past. It's usually unconscious, but it might be reprogrammed (transformed). If you manage to reprogrammed this, you have done a good and important job, not only for you but for the rest of the world as well (because everything is connected and you then help to raise our collective consciousness).

One way of doing it is to consciously take control over your mind, that is to be aware and not act and react automatically. This way, you can control what you focus on, and choose your feelings and how you want to react to things happening in your life, since this are also conscious choices. Just as an actor. Many of them really know how to adapt to their role. They have a rich range of emotions, created by their thoughts.

The German author and spiritual teacher, **Eckhart Tolle**, says that negative feelings poison the body and disturb its balance and harmonic function. He also says that feelings are the body's reaction to our

thoughts. Further, he talks about how everyone carries something he calls the pain body, a cluster of old feelings and emotional pains. If these are not treated and set free, they will create problems for us. He mentions that we know start to acknowledge that stress and negative feelings, like anxiety and anger, are one of the main causes behind degenerative illnesses as cancer and heart disease.

If negative feelings have an impact on our health, the same must go for positive feelings. It's a good strategy to work on evoking positive feelings. It's a good method to be grateful for everything you are and have and everything that happens in your life. And if you focus on solutions rather than problems, the positive rather than the negative, healthier habits are created. Using humor and laughter is a good way to improve your health.

Positive thoughts, attitudes, and feelings help to strengthen our immune system. Visualization exercises can be of good help. Visualize yourself healthy will affect the cells and the body. This can also be used in other areas of our lives, in need of improvement. It cannot be done in a superficial way, it must be heartfelt, you really must see and feel yourself as healthy. The visualization becomes a confirmation. This can be difficult for some, and if so, it's better to start slowly, like telling yourself: *I will be better soon, everything will be ok, this is just a temporary condition etc.* If you trust the process, you can thank for that the problems are already solved. If this is going to work, the conscious state must be maintained. It's no use in telling yourself this once, and then return to old patterns and hope for the best. The mechanisms of the universe work all the time. So, what's needed is for you to practice focusing on positive feelings and thoughts, and trust the process. It's not without reason athletes use mental coaches. If it can be used in sports, you should also be able to use it to improve your health.

There are much to appreciate in conventional medicine, it has done much good and it's great in many areas. Examples of this are acute things like broken legs and burns, as well as serious illness. But it has its shortcomings when it comes to seeing the whole picture. When doctors treat the patients, it's more about treating the symptoms. There are not

much time and care for the patient. The illness is treated, but not the individual. The solution in too many cases is to prescribe medicine, which mostly subdues the symptoms but rarely cure the cause. What about the spouse who loses a lifelong partner? That several of them dies within a short time after each other, is a well-known «widowhood effect». The process you go through when you lose your spouse is full of stress and sorrow, and you are therefore more apt to illness in body and mind. The body can be healed, but treating the body doesn't mend a broken heart. Many doctors and nurses have understood this, and practice it as well, but they find themselves in a system that's difficult to change.

When doctors and nurses have the possibility to give better care, use more time on the patient and try to see the whole picture, they have the possibility to uncover and unravel deeper problems. It's a paradox that this has not been understood and implemented in the health system, because it would have saved society a lot of money, not to mention decreased people's suffering significantly. Today, it seems like it's a race against time to treat as many people as possible in the shortest amount of time. If the budget and decreasing the costs are what's most important, then society has not understood much. With that mentality, individuals are not seen, and there is not much chance to prevent. As we all know, repairing is much more expensive than preventing. Alternative therapists often achieve better results. One of the reasons might be that they have more time to listen and really see the patient and that they try to see the whole picture.

By the way, hospitals are seldom an inspiring and uplifting place to stay. Why not make them so? In fact, many patients feel they are worse after than before their stay in the hospital. And many doctors instill fear in their patient by their serious attitudes and their «realistic» prognosis, even if they mean good. And fear is devastating to the immune system. It is a reason the immune system becomes depleted. Why not spread some joy, fun, and hope to the patients? Like **Patch Adams** did? The 1998 film Patch Adams played by Robin Williams, was based on Adams' life and views on medicine.

It seems to me that chemotherapy, the method chosen by

conventional medicine to treat cancer, is not the correct method. It is, among other things, very hard on the body. For the ones who wishes to use conventional medicine, I have a stronger faith in immune therapy. It combines two different medicines and is now researched and implemented. It turns out that immune therapy works better than chemotherapy, with fewer side effects.

The purpose of medicines should be to help and reinforce the self-healing mechanisms of the body. The same goes for the tasks of the doctor, as well as for everyone else working in the health system. They should work to stimulate, help, and encourage the inner doctor in all humans. The same should apply for those working with alternative treatments.

It's not difficult to imagine that negative thoughts like worries, hate, fear, greed, bitterness etc. might influence our health both mentally and physically. As already mentioned, some call this poison for the body. Over time, things that are left untreated and undiminished will increase the risk of manifesting themselves as disease symptom. If you don't take those signals seriously, they might manifest themselves further as some disease or other. No need to say that this also blocks our own happiness, quality of life, joy, and well-being.

Many have heard the phrase: you create your own reality. I am convinced that this is true. There is more and more indicating this with regards to our own health. The power of thought is significant. The placebo effect is an example of the power of our consciousness. If we have such control over our own health, why shouldn't this also apply on our own happiness and joy? Marcus Aurelius shall once have said the following:

«The happiness in your life depends on the quality of your thoughts».

As a society, we should break the vicious circle where we believe that health, joy, and happiness depend on authorities or other outer elements, and go over to a golden circle where we understand that we are this authority and that we control and are responsible for our own health, happiness, and joy.

In the book, *Mind over Medicine – scientific proof that you can heal yourself* by **Lissa Ranking**, she says that the body by nature is made so that it can heal itself, and that the consciousness controls this self-healing system. Further on, she says that while the placebo effect shows the power of positive thoughts, expectations, hopes and loving care, the nocebo effect (the opposite) shows the power of negative attitudes. About the placebo effect, she says that if you, for instance, tell patients in a clinical study that they will receive a pill to reduce their pains, there are great chances that the pains will disappear even if they only get a sugar pill. But if you warn them that the treatment might lead to nausea and vomiting, there is a great possibility that they will vomit even if they never got the actual medicine.

This means that it's not the placebo pill itself that's important, but the words and the care (or lack of care) when the placebo pill is given. The consciousness of the recipient decides the power of the given words. Doctors have a high reputation and authority in the society, so many put great importance into what they say. Thus, the doctor in himself is a placebo, or in worse case, a nocebo. As a doctor or another person of authority, you must be aware of what you are saying, even if it's the recipient's consciousness who finally decides.

To get a deeper explanation of what's physiologically going on in the body when the states of consciousness are changed, Lissa Rankin interviewed the cell biologist and author, **Dr. Bruce Lipton**. Here is a small excerpt from her book:

When I asked how faith can change the environments of the cells, Dr. Lipton described that the brain is perception, but the consciousness is interpretation. Everything is about how the consciousness interprets an event in life. You can, for instance, open your eyes and see a person. (This is the objective perception of the brain.) Your consciousness might recognize this person as someone you love. (This is the interpretation of the consciousness): the brain then frees oxytocin, dopamine, endorphin, and other positive chemicals, which create a healthy cell medium in the blood for all the cells in the body.

If you open your eyes and see a person (perception), and the brain interprets this person as frightening, the brain frees stress hormones and other fear chemicals that damage the cells. Lipton says: «When we change the consciousness' interpretation of

illness from fear and danger to positive attitudes, the brain's reaction is biochemical, the blood changes the culture of the body cells, and the cells are changed on a biological level.»

If you want to go deep into the placebo effect, I recommend **Dr. Joe Dispenza** and his book *You Are the Placebo*. The book combines the latest research in neuroscience, biology, psychology, hypnosis, behavioral conditioning, and quantum physics to demystify the workings of the placebo effect. And in it, he shares numerous documented cases of those who reversed cancer, heart disease, depression, crippling arthritis, and even the tremors of Parkinson's disease by believing in a placebo.

The principle that applies to solving world problems also applies to solving our own health problems. Find the underlying thoughts, the deep, incorrectly programmed beliefs in yourself about yourself. If you can reprogram this to something positive, you have come a long way.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle where our consciousness has little to say for our health, happiness, and joy, and go over to a golden circle where the consciousness has a lot to say for our health, happiness, and joy.

In the Norwegian documentary from 2016, *The man from Snaasa*, we see the well-known healer, Joralf Gjerstad, treat several persons. We see that some of them react to what's happening right there and then, while Gjerstad is treating them. Spontaneously, they get better and you can see the expression on their face. In my opinion, what's going on is that Gjerstad (and healers in general) activates the self-healing powers in those they are treating. Their belief systems are not strong enough for them to do it on their own and Joralf Gjerstad (and helpers from the other side) function as middlemen because they believe that a power outside themselves are needed to improve their health. And in a way, that's true, as long as you have not found that power within yourself. Healers know they have the power to heal.

A documentary about the healer within us all is to be released in 2017 and it's called **HEAL**. The movie takes us on a scientific and spiritual

journey, where we discover that our thoughts, beliefs, and emotions have a huge impact on our health and ability to heal. The latest science reveals that we are not victims of unchangeable genes, nor should we buy into a scary prognosis. The fact is we have more control over our health and life than we have been taught to believe.

There are many elements that have a role in our health. To be out in nature has a positive effect on our health, something we have known for a long time. The researcher Gregory Bratman at the University of Stanford, California, has proven that even shorter trips into nature have measurable and positive effects, and that closeness to green surroundings and the sound of the ocean might change the brain and reduce worries.

Loneliness has a negative effect. Today, it's a huge problem that many consider themselves separated and isolated from the community. This can lead to impaired health and a larger susceptibility to disease. A recommended movie about this topic is the Swedish documentary «The Swedish Theory of Love» from 2015. It's about the Swedes' obsession with independence and self-sufficiency and how this ideal, coupled with a welfare state that provides for every physical need, produces loneliness and alienation. The chapter *living community* has more about the impact loneliness and community have on health.

Another field not much touched by health care is your faith. It is of course up to each one of us what we believe in or not. My point is that it influences your mentality and your health. If you have a belief system based on fear, for instance, and you are afraid of dying and being judged in the afterlife, this will have a different impact on your mentality than if your belief system is based on love and safety, making you not afraid of dying. Further, shame and sin are not a good base for your health nor for joy or happiness. Neither is this a good base for bringing a meaning to life.

A recommended book about this topic (and many more) is the book *Where God and Medicine Meet: A Conversation Between a Doctor and a Spiritual Messenger* by Neale Donald Walsch and Brit Cooper.

Another element not much present in today's health care is how we

are influenced by our previous lives. I mean, and many with me, that experiences from a previous life might influence this one. Some people have problems that are not easy to explain rationally. It can be difficult to find an explanation when you look at it based on today's picture of the world. In those cases, reincarnation might be a plausible explanation. I am convinced that this is a reality, and an increasing number of people in the western world are thinking the same. Regression therapy has, for that very reason, become more common, and might be worth trying if you feel that something with a negative impact runs deeper than this current life.

Good health should be holistically based, where body, mind, and spirit are in balance. If you, in one area, does everything correctly, for instance, exercise and eat healthy as mentioned before, but you struggle with fear and many negative thoughts (in many instances they are underlying) in other areas of your life, you are still unbalanced. In her books, Anita Moorjani writes that she became sick with cancer even if she was obsessed with eating healthy. Why? Because underlying all her healthy approaches she was fearful. In fact, she was so fearful of getting cancer herself and that's why she got it in the first place. Her books describe how she overcame her cancer and recovered fully. Another book to recommend in this regard is Lissa Rankins *The Fear Cure*. Her opinion is that fear, left untreated, becomes a serious risk factor for conditions from heart disease to diabetes and cancer. That's the reason she explains why we need to heal ourselves from the fear that puts our health at risk and robs our lives of joy.

Dissatisfaction and stress on work, for instance, strain your mental health and can later result in physical diseases. It's important that you find a job, where you thrive, can use your abilities and do something meaningful. It's especially nice if you do something that has a greater meaning, something that can help others and contribute to the common good. That will be a good base for a more satisfying and happy life. Many are those who have experienced the joy and happiness of giving and sharing with others.

Consciousness medicine, energy medicine, quantum medicine and

natural medicine should have a more prominent place in the future. The same applies for many alternative/additional treatment methods, and many of them also belong to these categories.

To focus too much on the past or the future has a direct impact on our well-being, like happiness and joy. Being present here and now give you a greater possibility to be intent on life and its miracle. This is a condition where you just are. Meditation can be recommended to strengthen the present and get closer to your own inner source. This is also something that promotes your health.

Many believe that joy and happiness are just something that happens to them, that they are coming from an outer source. But it all depends on how your consciousness interprets and react to what's going on. It's all individual, someone can be very happy about one thing, while another reacts in a different way. True happiness and joy don't arrive from a source outside ourselves but from the inside. We have all experienced that a positive thing has happened, which we rejoice over. We have, for instance, bought something that brings us joy. But this joy seldom lasts very long. The trick is to find happiness and joy inside yourself, so that you don't depend on others or on events or on things to make you happy. (Or make you sad and scared for that matter, like what's president Trump going to do next?) You can, of course, enjoy and be happy about what's going on in the outer world, that's one of the reasons we are here. It would be good to find a balance, enjoy and be happy with everything in the outer world, but also now that this is not lasting and that true happiness and joy comes from within. A quote from Sri Chinmoy is at its place here:

«Judge nothing, you will be happy. Forgive everything, you will be happier. Love everything, you will be happiest.»

The film **Happy** is a practical and down to earth documentary about happiness and its nature and how you can get more of it in your life.

Your self-worth is of immense importance and should not be underestimated. I recommend reading Anita Moorjani's book *What if this is Heaven? How our cultural myths prevent us from experiencing heaven on earth*. A quote from the book states; *«When you love yourself and know your true worth,*

there is nothing you cannot do or heal.» Her attempt is to debunk some of the biggest myths we have been buying into – myths that have prevented us from fully living our lives simply because they have been the dominant beliefs in our surrounding culture. Here is another quote from the book; *«We are conditioned to believe that loving ourselves – or even worse, admitting that we love ourselves – is terribly egoistical and narcissistic. But nothing could be further from the truth. Narcissism is born from its opposite – a lack of self-love and an obsession with seeking attention from others to compensate for the love we are not giving ourselves.»*

The way we think about ourselves actually has an influence on our personal income too. Those with low self-worth, self-esteem, and negative thinking patterns tend to sabotage their own chances of financial success. Those who believe they are not worthy or capable will look towards their past failures to justify their negative self-image, thereby maintaining the status quo and hindering their financial growth. Those with a positive attitude and a high sense of self-worth will look towards their past achievements to know that they can heal their financial situation and succeed in new financial endeavors.

There is still lots of stuff we humans don't know. I also mean that there still are parts of our brain which hold a meaning yet to be discovered. The brain is a tool for the consciousness. We are creating and creative beings, who use our consciousness to shape our lives. Our consciousness has unbelievable powers, it's not without reason we say that faith can move mountains. There is little doubt that our consciousness has a great impact on our health, happiness, and joy. And since our consciousness is us, then it's us who control how much of these benefits we want. And we want as much as possible, don't we? I believe everyone wants that, and this is also achievable, as well as deserved.

Chapter 10

The economic world of the future

«Being the richest man in the cemetery doesn't matter to me. Going to bed at night saying we've done something wonderful... that's what matters to me.»

- Steve Jobs

Competitive mentality and survival of the fittest are outdated thinking. The opposite is true. We can again draw the parallels to nature. Most animals and birds live in packs or as couples and therefore survive by sharing and cooperating with each other. Trees, for instance, survive by the help of cooperation, and sharing. Professor Suzanne W. Simard at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, explains how trees are more complex than we have ever believed. She claims that the trees, just like animals, communicate and share information with each other and transfers «the heritage» to the next generation. It becomes, as several researchers call it, a «**Wood** Wide Web».

Further on, she explains that by the help of a huge network of underground fungus, the trees can share important nutrition «depending on who needs it». That way it's ensured that the ecosystem of the woods gives and receives exactly the correct amount needed to keep the trees healthy. This is in a way equivalent to how the human brain and our nerve cells function. Before they die, the dying trees move their resources, like important minerals, into young trees. If you want to know

more, you can see her lecture on TED **How trees talk to each other**. The German author, **Peter Wohlleben**, describes similar conditions in his book *The secret lives of trees*.

We humans cannot continue with «business as usual», something must change. Our economic system doesn't work. Capitalism is self-destructive. Capitalism requires indefinitely growth in a finite world. It is also a competitive system based on profit, which reinforces and favors the few who already have much, and thus it creates inequality, poverty, concentrated power to a few and in addition, it doesn't take the environment into consideration. If you reflect a little over the words competition and the survival of the fittest, the world selfishness will appear. Selfishness leads to separation and disunity, as well as many other problems for society. It makes you more concerned about what's best for you, rather than what's best for the community. The more the soul can flow through the personality, the more it operates out of a wish to do good for all.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle based on competition and go over to a golden circle, based on cooperation.

As the systems work now, the rich people just get richer, and they distribute these accrued benefits among their own families. It's like a game of Monopoly, where the ones who have secured the best real estates, continue to receive money from the others and just keep adding to their own wealth even faster, while the others get further and further behind. A situation very hard to get out of, because the systems (the rules of the game) prevent it. Maybe it's time to change the rules of the game?

An old saying says that «money is the root of all evil». This is not correct. Money is completely neutral. Neither is there anything wrong with having money. A poor person can be an amazing person, and the same goes for a rich one. We must dig deeper to find the root. What we can question is the quantity, the distribution, and the use of it. These are more ethical and moral questions, and then we have returned to the core causes of our problems, which we already have discussed in another

chapter. If humans looked at everybody else as their next of kin, and as a part of their own family (which is exactly what we are in the ultimate reality), we would never tolerate that people were hungry and living in poverty. We would be happy to share our wealth. It's all about showing solidarity towards each other. An economy based on profit and competition should have been exchanged with what we could call a «solidary economy». High, ethical principles should be emphasized more in the economic world of the future. In other words; the old and outdated bottom line with a focus on as much money and power as possible should be exchanged with a new and far more solidarity towards nature and less fortunate humans.

There are companies operating like this. An example is **Mindvalley**. This is a futuristic workplace, who wish to change the world. They have about 200 employees. They originated from the USA, but have moved to Malaysia. One of the largest wishes of Mindvalley is to give back to earth. The goal is to, within the year 2050, have given away 1 billion dollars to social benefits all over the world. In addition, they have a goal to improve the education for millions of people all over the globe. Mindvalley's list of priorities is as follows:

1. The planet first
2. Customers
3. Employees
4. Profit last

Today, companies take the environment more and more into consideration and show responsibility for the community, among other things like social entrepreneurship. **Wisdom 2.0** works to improve this by arranging conferences, meetings, and seminars about the topic. Another recommended reading is the **Global Opportunity Report**. The mindset driving this report is to turn around our conception of good business towards a more holistic vision of profit and purpose. The same goes for **Conscious Business Initiative**.

You might puzzle over the fact that those who have a lot, yes, even ridiculously much, doesn't feel like they have enough. Why is it that

someone feels like they never have enough? Can it be that many of them compensate for lack of wealth in their inner life by creating a lot in the outer? The fact that someone has the need to show his or her wealth might be a result of this.

Those who have gathered enormous wealth, often have done so at the expense of others, mainly of those who doesn't have much, like in the game of Monopoly. Often, the ones on the top of a company receive large wages and bonuses. And the money must come from somewhere. It's like the principle of Robin Hood turned around, taking from those who doesn't have much and give it to those who already have more than enough. The product or service they sell could have been cheaper and the employees could have been paid better, so that the differences weren't too big. Or they could have given the money to philanthropic initiatives. Many companies have realized this and done something about it, some have started a social entrepreneurship and some give back to society in other ways. The organization **Conscious Capitalism** work from such a way of thinking.

The way the economic world is built today, with an excessive focus on competition and profit, also affects our health. The competitive mentality often leads to stress, which in turn can result in physical health problems or burnout, low self-esteem, or other mental problems. In conjunction with all that, we are often offered medicines, which mostly only reduce the symptoms without doing anything with the real causes. In addition, they often come with some side effects. This quest for profit might ultimately lead to the pharmaceutical industry being more concerned about selling their product than people's health. If we think about it, this industry depends on people being sick. If not, they cannot sell their products. Might it be a reason doctors tend to prescribe medicine? You should remember that the body has mechanisms that allow it to heal itself. A visible proof is a wound that grows by itself. Today, mental health problems are extensive, but more human contact and understanding, less pressure at job and fewer working hours, as well as working on a deeper psychological and spiritual level would help significantly as well as in most cases be a better choice than medicines.

Several other negative consequences of our profit orientated society can also be briefly mentioned here. Doping in sport is one of them. Another is wages. Highly qualified people are drawn towards higher wages even if the companies offer products that are not always good for the society. Innovations that could have benefitted society, are stopped by patents, so that other innovators are unable to develop their innovations any further. Sometimes this is part of a conscious marketing strategy, laying the patent to rest for several years. (Tesla and Toyota have both taken the opposite approach and freed many of their patents so that others can use the technology for the benefit of mankind.) Research is in many cases underfunded, or overlooked if it doesn't generate profit. The same goes for good ideas, products and idealistic projects struggling to raise finance because it doesn't generate profit. Companies moving their production to countries with cheap labor (often on slave wages) and without consideration, fire their workers in the original country. Companies who protect their own trademarks by making them incompatible with others, leading to unnecessary duplication and frustrated users.

According to statistician and professor Hans Rosling (1948 – 2017) at **Gapminder**, there are fewer people living in extreme poverty than before. And this is very positive, but far too many people are still living on a subsistence level, they count over a billion. FN's sustainable development goals have as **one of 17 Sustainable Development Goals** to exterminate extreme poverty within 2030.

Other economical elements are not going in a positive direction. The economic gap between the richest and the poorest increases in many countries. This inhibits growth and equality, according to a report from OECD. The report **All on Board: Making Inclusive Growth Happen** from 2015, shows that this underdevelopment will continue and everybody loses. The rich and powerful are clinging to their position. This has led to revolutions before and will do so again. Great Britain voted to leave EU (Brexit) and Trump is now the President of USA. I believe one important reason for these major events happening can be blamed on this huge economic imbalance, where so many people are

frustrated because they have not benefited from prosperity as others have. A more natural and fair way would be to raised taxes for the rich and lowered it for the poor as one way to close the gap. It's all about love and empathy for each other and seeing everyone as one.

A new report from January 2017 (published by the international help organization **Oxfam**) shows that the fortune of only the 8 richest people in the world (whereas none are women) is equivalent to what's owned by the poorest half of the world's population (3.6 billion people). According to Oxfam, it shows how big business and the super-rich are fueling the inequality crises by dodging taxes, driving down wages, and using their power to influence politics. Oxfam says it calls for a fundamental change in the way we manage our economies, so that they work for all people, and not just a fortunate few. Since 2010 the wealth of these rich people has increased by 44 %, while the poorest people in the world (one person in three in the world lives in poverty, whom the majority are women) has become 41 % poorer. Since the turn of the century, half the capital increase in the world has gone to the top 1 %. Oxfam's analysis shows that over half the world's billionaires either inherited their wealth or accumulated it through industries, which are prone to corruption and cronyism.

Oxfam further states that:

«Public anger with inequality is already creating political shockwaves across the globe. Inequality has been cited as a significant factor in the election of Donald Trump in the US, the election of President Duterte in the Philippines, and Brexit in the UK.»

Oxfam's blueprint for a more human economy includes:

«Governments end the extreme concentration of wealth to end poverty. Governments should increase taxes on both wealth and high incomes to ensure a more level playing field, and to generate funds needed to invest in healthcare, education, and job creation. Governments cooperate rather than just compete. Governments should work together to ensure workers are paid a decent wage, and to put a stop to tax dodging and the race to the bottom on corporate tax.»

Oxfam is calling for solutions and examples to follow like the multi-billion Euro company **Mondragon**, who is owned by its 74,000-strong workforce. All employees receive a decent wage because its pay structure

ensures less inequality.

I mean this has many other consequences. Not only does it lead to fewer possibilities for the poor to participate in the society, but it also leads to huge worries and sufferings, as well as lots of effort wasted on the fight to survive or paying bills. Inequality also plays a role regarding narcotics and prostitution. In our western part of the world, many are locked in low paid jobs because they need to pay off their debts. Briefly said, economic inequality inhibits growth. And lots of human potentials that could have been used significantly better is wasted. The economic cost for the society regarding all this is astronomical. The world is missing so incredibly much when this potential is not allowed to express itself and contribute to the world. There are many geniuses out there, like Leonardo Da Vinci and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, which never will be able to enrich the world because they are suppressed by poverty and the fight to survive.

Other dangers also follow great differences. It creates a base for conflicts. That is the reason for many wars throughout history. There is also a danger that those who have plenty regards themselves as more valuable than those who have little. This is an unhealthy development and an incorrect conclusion. All people have the same worth, there is a great potential in each one of us.

Here is an example of a person that at a young age was not regarded as particularly valuable. He was four years old before he could speak. He didn't excel at school and he was very lonely. His sister even said that he was not particularly good in math and that his co-students regarded him as a little stupid. The boy's name was Albert Einstein.

«Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify, or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.» - Steve Jobs

You are all immensely valuable and have a vast potential. The upcoming movie **RiseUP** is a culture shifting documentary describing a new model of success emerging from around the world. This model is giving rise to businesses that do good and to people for living a radically fulfilled, purpose driven lives.

There are many ways to redirect and redistribute benefits, prevent overconsumption, and stop pollution of the environment. We can put a tax on consumption, particularly consumption that damage the environment. We can introduce openness and honesty when selling products, like the cost of the production, profit gained by the company and the consequences it has on the environment. (By the way, practicing openness and honesty creates the best personal relationship. Why should that not work with corporations too?) If corporations get high profit they should pay more tax and not use tax havens. Instead of a race to the bottom in corporate tax, would it not be better to do the opposite? That would be better for all and not only for the few. Introduce high fines for industry and companies for pollution. Taxation of transactions in the finance economy etc. Introduce rules that create openness and prevent tinkering with taxes and excessive financial speculation. Openness around international trade and investments agreements and prevent such agreements from favor certain actors, like large multinational companies. As more and more robots are introduced to the labor market, we can create funds (paid by a robot tax) that will compensate fewer working hours and the redundant workers for their loss of income. (By the way, it's a good thing that the robots will be doing most of the labor in the future, then we will «finally» have the time and leisure to explore what it is to be human.) Introduce a shorter working week (with the same payment) and reduce the retirement age so that other can be introduced to the labor market, especially the young ones. Strengthen local products, like local food. Stop the possibility for speculation on life necessities. The way it is now, we have ended up with a system which makes it possible for individual actors and multinational companies to profit at the cost of the society. It would be better if most of their profit was returned to the community. Privatization of public

services is therefore not a good strategy.

A way to create a more just society is to ensure minimal wages for everyone. This would be a form of citizen wage or basic income, so that everyone has enough to pay for a place to live and enough food. Then the human being doesn't need to use plenty of time and effort (which is a waste of resources) to worry about these necessities, and at the same time, we can reduce the need for bureaucracy. Only a few will be content with such a minimum wage. And we are also creative persons who don't like to be inactive. This will give people greater freedom to pursue own ideas and own workplaces. Social tension in the society will be reduced. Money can be collected in many ways, like by ordinary taxes as today. The taxes mention in the previous section are also a possibility, another one is to reduce the huge military expenses and redistribute it. When peace in the world is achieved, enormous amount of money and human recourses could be distributed and benefitted Mankind.

Alaska, USA, has had citizen wages since 1976. It is the only state in the USA, where the differences have not increased. Several other countries are on their way to test citizen wages, among those are Finland, Canada, and the Netherlands. Attempts have already been made several places and have thus given insight into pros and cons. Several prominent figures, like the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, Milton Friedman, highlights that the pros overshadow the cons. There are organizations working for basic income, like **The Basic Income Earth network** or **Citizen's Income Trust**.

Today, there is plenty of money in circulation in the world, to give everybody citizen wages and eradicate poverty. Just take the tax havens and the enormous amounts of money in circulation in those places. According to the organization **Attac**, wealthy individuals around the world have withheld tax in so-called tax havens for astronomical amounts of money. In fact, a 2012 report by the British Tax Justice Network estimated that between US\$ 21 trillion and \$ 32 trillion is sheltered from taxes in unreported tax havens worldwide (more facts to be found at **Tax Justice Network**). A trillion dollars in perspective is 1000 billion, or 1000 000 million (a million times a million).

It's also a well-known fact that companies withheld tax with the help from those tax paradises. This way, large companies like Apple, Google and Starbucks doesn't pay much tax. The Panama-papers revealed how giant the tax evasions are and how important it is with openness around our economy. At the end, it's all about being greedy on behalf of the community. This money could have done much good for the society, which companies, large and small also depend upon. Here is what The **Global Alliance for Tax Justice** says about this:

«Such systemic tax avoidance (both legal and illegal) has led ordinary people to lose out as wealth flows outwards from the public and into the private hands of the few. This distorts economies, undermines democracy and deprives people of the vital public services we need to live.»

There are also huge sums in corruption that could be used for the benefit of society (more facts at **Transparency International**).

The question is also why it's so important to long for accumulating huge wealth, when the important things in life are free of charge? It's all a question of morality. And yet again, this make us return to the core causes of our problems. They are spiritual (moral, values, belief systems etc.). The real question is if you are controlled by your personality, which buys, collects, and holds on, or if you are controlled by your soul, which shares and gives. As long as you don't see your neighbor as yourself and all people as your family, then you are not willing to give and share. We, humans, have forgotten who we are and that's what's causing all the problems in the world. Why not find out who you *really* are and *why* you are here in this world? Then you, sooner or later, will find out that we are all a huge human family, where all are connected. We are all in this together. And on a soul level, we are all far more and far deeper connected than any human family here on earth.

The opposite of basic income should also apply. There should be established a limit as to how much one person can earn, thus a maximum wage. This would prevent too much inequality. And why not do the same for companies, especially large ones? In that connection, it's interesting to observe that the best-operated societies today are the Nordic ones. It's because they have the smallest differences.

Sharing economy is on its way into society at full speed. This is not about owning things, but to get access to things or services when you need them. Or if you have something extra, you can share with others. Here, we can mention Uber (managing a form of taxi service) and to a certain extend Airbnb (rental of housing), but the latter two doesn't quite fall into the concept of sharing economy as they are too commercial. And they are not regulated as the traditional services they are competing with. It's a kind of irony that some of the new sharing economy companies does not share the profit better, but are operating like in the old economy, where the aim is to collect the most money for the shareholders. Why not let the people working in the sharing economy also share the accumulated wealth? Could they be employee-owned or function like a cooperative? **Loconomics** is that kind of sharing economy company. It's a cooperative of service professionals (massage therapists, dog walkers, florists, you name it) who want to find clients, help clients find them, and support local business—without middlemen or far-off investors.

If you think about it, tax is also a form of sharing. Many, strangely enough, regards tax as a necessary evil, but it's rather a system that benefits the whole society and also the same ones that saw it as a necessary evil. We collect money on one pot and distribute them to society in form of necessary functions as health care, fire department, police department, justice etc. At the same time, the tax should also be used to take care of the «weakest» in society. When the society is not willing to share and contribute with tax to the common good, it faces the risk of breakdown (which is more or less what has happened in Greece). On the other side, we have again the Nordic model, where we are better at contributing to the community than many other countries. The result is a society that is wealthier than most other societies, and safer because the wealth is more evenly distributed.

Sharing Economy is a good thing if it is handled properly. So many things are idle and not in use most of the time, why not share it, it's both economic and environmentally friendly. Tips for more information about sharing economy: **The People Who Share** and the founder

Benita Matofska's talk at TEDx Frankfurt, Sharing Economy UK, Sharing Economy Conference, OuiShare, Shareconomy the movie.
See also Wikipedia on the subject.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle based on me, mine, and selfishness, and go over to a golden circle based on us, ours and sharing.

Another mentality and ideology which stand for fall is the growth principle. Today's common perception that growth is needed to make the economy good for the society, is outdated and old fashioned. It is not good, neither for humans nor nature and will not function much longer. Neither is it natural. What's natural is *natural growth*. The economist, Margit Kennedy, pointed out that exponential growth always will lead to crises. She meant that natural growth is something we find in nature, both with humans, animals, and plants. It takes place in the way that there first are a swift growth before it flattens and goes into a stable development. Bhutan in the Himalayas has introduced **gross national happiness** (GNH) instead of gross national product (GNP), which is common in the rest of the world. It surely must be better to base the society on happiness rather than growth? Anyway, as mentioned before, growth cannot continue forever in a world with limited recourses.

It's obvious that we cannot continue the way we do today. Many well-known economists, like Thomas Piketty and Joseph Stiglitz, are pointing this out. In the book «The Handbook of Alternative Theories of Economic Development» by economists Jayati Ghosh, Erik S. Reinert and Rainer Kattel more than 40 writers provide a comprehensive overview of alternative theories of economic growth.

The economic system based on a hunt for profit and growth, which we have entangled ourselves in, is not stable and contributes to economic bubbles as well as too large fluctuations in the market. In good times, this creates plenty of jobs and high profit for the investors. When the times are bad, the opposite happens, plenty of people lose their jobs and the investors lose their money. The fact that people are losing their jobs

leads to many serious consequences, it creates uncertainty regarding your ability to support your family. In many cases, you risk losing both your home and your health. The USA, which is an extreme capitalistic system, has often needed to increase its huge debt limit. That way, they have managed to just postpone their problems, without doing something with the causes (their pretty heavy capitalistic system with an increasing growth in consumption and growth). Not to mention the underlying core causes (like moral and attitudes). Early 2016, the American government debt had surpassed 19 trillion or 19 thousand billion dollars. In addition, there are also a lot of other countries with a debt so high that they, undoubtedly, will have problems in the future. It's unavoidable that these systems will collapse if changes are not made.

Neither should we continue to use products that pollute the way they do today. Most products pollute under their production, while transported, used, and thrown away. The economic system of today also brings with it another serious problem; manufacturers who consciously makes products with a short lifespan, so that you ever so often need to buy a new one. A known example of this is light bulbs. There is a documentary about this worth seeing, which is called *Pyramids of Waste*. When it doesn't pay to make lasting products, we all understand that this cannot go on for long. When the road ends on a cliff, then most of us understand that we must change direction. It's pure logic. An increasing number of people have seen this, but changes take time.

The Post Growth Institute is an organization worth taking a closer look at. This is an international network of people emphasizing on handling the causes rather than the symptoms of a wide range of social and environmental problems, to create a positive future which is not dependent on economic growth.

The network **BALLE** is also a recommended organization working to change our thoughts around economy and business in a more positive direction. They work with connecting leaders, spread solutions, and attract investors to local economies. They want to get away from the mentality where everyone looks out for themselves, and get a more community-oriented direction.

The author, **Charles Eisenstein**, promotes an economy based on giving, a gift economy. His book **Sacred Economics** is also available for free, or you can choose to pay for it if you feel you can afford it. A **gift economy** is a system where both goods and services are freely given, without direct expectations about payment. Some believe that a gift economy promotes and builds societies, while a market-based economy does the opposite.

In the Norwegian book *Living Economy* by Christian Egge, he has interviewed several of the world's prominent economists. One of them is **David Korten**. In their conversation, they also talk about how important a change in the awareness, as well as our cultural stories (belief systems), are when it comes to creating a better world. David Korten said the following about that:

«Before we have woken to new insights, we are prisoners, no matter what culture we belong to. The Philippine activist, Nicanor Perlas, made me aware of the power in our cultural stories – and to what extent social changes depend on changes in our basic cultural stories. Most of our stories confirm institutions representing an imperialistic dominance - religious and scientific stories included. This also applies to the scientific story that only material goods are real; that life is not much else than random results of material complexity, that consciousness is an illusion, and that we are programmed through our genes to be individualistic, competitive, and violent. This story takes away the meaning of life and means that the only reasonable thing to do is to fight for individual advantage and individual material satisfaction – mainly to divert us from despair over being alone in a dead and ruthless cosmos. Should we really believe that this draws the boundaries for our behavior as a species, as a society? This is a story that strongly puts a lid on status quo.

The same narrow perspective is engraved in our dominating economic thinking, especially in the neoliberal story about us being completely driven by individualism. One has even turned the reality upside down by pointing out that this is wanted quality, because it accelerates economic growth. It's quite possible that it stimulates growth, but in that case, it is a growth that ruins the environment and the possibility of a good human society.»

The latest book from David Korten is called *Change the Story, Change the Future: A Living Economy for a Living Earth*. In the book, Korten offers

a Sacred Life and Living Earth story grounded in a cosmology that affirms we are living beings born of a living Earth itself born of a living universe.

Circular economy is a way of thinking growing in popularity. Here, one has taken the cycles of nature and put it into an economic perspective. In nature, everything is reused, and thus waste doesn't exist. These thoughts are not new. Norsk Gjenvinning «Norwegian Recycling» was started in Oslo already back in 1926. Today, this is a large company with a turnover of more than a half a billion dollar. Linear economy is based on exploitation, one extract resources, produces goods which are then consumed before it's thrown away when it's no longer of any use. Circular economy, on the contrary, is based on reuse, repair, and recycling, so that nothing goes to waste. Thus, the resources are ensured for the generations to come. For more information about circular economy, it's recommended to visit the web page of **The Ellen MacArthur Foundation**.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle based on linear economy and go over to a golden economy, based on new, economic models, like circular economy.

It's a paradox that western societies have gotten an overdose of material things. Has this made us any happier? Isn't it so that we use too much time on all these things that we accumulate? Couldn't we have used this time on something more meaningful? Is it at all wise to count time in cash? Couldn't we be better at helping each other? Could we be more together with others, like family and friends? Could we be better in sharing our things? You don't necessarily need to own a car or a boat, it sufficient to have access. It seems like people without so much material stuff are happier. This is something to think about. At least, it's proof that you don't need plenty of assets or the biggest ones of whatever, to be happy. The more whole and «rich» you are in your inner life; the less interesting outer wealth is. It might be good to have, but is not that which matter most in life. Actually, competition, collecting, and exaggeration

of the material aspect lead to a dying culture eating itself.

We in the west have become dependent on material stuff. There should be a balance in all things. We need a cure. Maybe this over consumption is a substitute for a lack of inner values, that are lost? We must once again learn about the real values in society. What can we learn from the past? What does really matter? What gives life a meaning? How do you get more happiness into your life? Don't you do that by finding happiness inside yourself? Maybe giving and sharing bring greater satisfaction than consummation and ownership? I am sure that when we are cured of the material abuse, we will feel much better. This will be good for both humans and nature.

Many so-called primitive societies have a much larger community feeling, where they in a larger extent take care of each other. Much more so, than what's common in our so-called modern society. Small societies often give another feeling of solidarity than larger ones. In the latter, we often feel separated and not so connected, loneliness is, therefore, common, which has become one of the largest problems of our time. Today, we are not doing well in facilitating socialization and affiliation, thus creating a community mentality. On the other hand, good things are happening, both architects and city planners have started to take these life important values into consideration.

It feels meaningful to give. It's not without reason, that an increasing number of people becomes philanthropists. **The Giving Pledge** is an organization, where the members, which are amongst the richest families and companies in the world, have committed giving almost all their wealth to charity.

Microloans are another way of giving. The organization **Kiva** is a great step helping the poor in the developing countries to realize their dreams, business ideas and to create a way of living. This way people are getting help to help themselves which is the best way to do it. Everyone can lend small amounts (with 0 % interest rate) to individuals in developing countries. The payback is 97 %. Some chose to take the money back, others give a new microloan or donate the whole amount to Kiva. Today, you also have crowdfunding like **Indiegogo** and much

similar. You also have **Givology**, which are an online giving marketplace for education.

More banks are operated according to ethical and sustainable principles. **The Global Alliance for Banking on Values** is an independent network of banks using finance to deliver sustainable economic, social and environmental development, and change the banking system so that it is more transparent.

Charles Darwin's theory «survival of the fittest» has dominated the society for far too long. And by the way, it's a myth that's assigned to him. This has led to extreme ways of thinking, like the mindset of the Nazis. In nature and in the human world, it's not the strongest who survives, which I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. We humans survives by cooperate and care for each other. The personality tends to compete, but the nature of the soul is to cooperate. Charles Darwin mentioned «survival of the fittest» only twice in his book, *The Descent of Man*, and the word «love» 95 times. Here is a quote from Darwin himself: *«It is not the strongest of the species that survives but the most adaptable.» And another one: “sympathy will have been increased through natural selection; for those communities, which included the greatest number of the most sympathetic members, would flourish best, and rear the greatest number of offspring».*

Researchers at the University of Berkley, California, lean towards the theory that it's not the strongest who «survives» but the kindest, those who are friendly and considerate. The more you give, the more respect you get in return. A study, started by Robb Willer, showed that those who acted purely out of self-interest gained little respect. Those who were generous were the ones highest esteemed by others. This is logical. You don't find many statues of selfish and self-centered humans, except in dictatorships, and if you find them, they are probably there because the very same people ordered them. You can see it clearly in the political world lately by comparing former president of USA, Obama, with the new president, Trump. Obama represents kindness and Trump self-interest and it's not hard to figure out who is the most popular.

Professor Didier Cossin from IMD School of Business in Lausanne, an institute which is world leading in educating top leaders, says that

farsighted companies that want to do something good for the society they live in, do significantly better financial than companies that have a short-term focus. This goes to show that overall, a high, ethical standard is the most profitable.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle based on the survival of the fittest and go over to a golden circle, based on that it's the ones showing kindness, goodness, and care who survives best.

Gandhi is an example of the power of showing care and consideration. He fought the British Empire without weapons and thus freed India by using nonviolence. His goodness overcame the powerful British Empire. If you have Netflix, you can watch the beautiful documentary, *Gandhi*. As a society in our time, it is more sensible and highly necessary for mankind to go away from «survival of the fittest» to «survival of the kindest».

This is what Dalai Lama says about his religion: *«My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness.»*

In a society where the prevailing mindset is competition and the survival of the fittest, there are always too many who loses. In a society where the mindset embraces cooperation and sharing, everybody wins.

Eventually, humans will lay the competitive mindset behind, as well as the thought that the fittest survives, just like a child stops to play with certain toys just because it has outgrown them. The human is about to outgrow some of its «toys». They have been important experiences for mankind, both good and bad. But it is time to move towards a far nicer future for everyone, which includes cooperation, kindness and sharing on a higher level.

Chapter 11

Organization in the future

«Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.»

- Confucius 551-579 B.C.

How can we organize ourselves in the best possible way in the future? As it is today, most are organized hierarchically, meaning from the top down. This goes for the society, as well as public institutions, political parties, organizations, and companies. There are many commands and plenty of control. I mean this is an outdated model and I shall try to explain why.

First, a short question. What's more effective, a round-a-bout or a traffic light? The answer is obvious. There is a reason behind the explosion in the number of round-a-bouts outside all the city centers. It's because this principle is the most effective and the cheapest in operation. A traffic light is more bureaucratic, inefficient and time-consuming. They are also more expensive to maintain. Round-a-bouts, on the contrary, are self-organizing. Could it be that this principle may be transferred to other sectors of society? I mean that the answer is yes.

As an employee in a company, it's not very motivating to be ordered around. Done in a correct way, with respect for the one concerned, it would not be so bad. But motivation to do something is one thing, inspiration something else. Motivation is something that is «pressed» on you, either by others or by yourself. You need to be motivated for the

tasks that are not pleasurable. If you are not happy in your job, you need to, one way or the other, be motivated to do it. The salary could be this motivation. The power of motivation must be found outside yourself. When you don't want to do something, you can motive yourself, but you need a motive – the thing that makes you do it. The problem with motivation is its constant in need for renewal. In the end, this is very exhausting and the lust for life may get a blow. Since there is a great emphasize today on working to earn enough money to live, this topic is not without importance. What kind of life do we have if we are not happy in our jobs? Since this is a great part of our lives, it should be something we look forward to.

If you, on the other hand, are inspired, then work will be more of a joy, you might even work for free because you enjoy it so much. If what you do are fun, you are driven by passion, time flies, and creativity blossom, then you are truly inspired. Inspiration comes from within. You don't need motivation, because everything you do feels good, and you yearn after doing what you are doing. Then your work performance will show themselves. Those who are inspired are the ones who change the world.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle based on motivation for doing what you don't want to do, and go over to a golden circle, based on inspiration to do what you really want.

Bureaucratic and hierarchically controlled structures rarely contribute to inspiration. These structures are starting to get outdated. It's dysfunctional, like many other things in the human society. Unidirectional work is rarely something for the modern man. Luckily, we are more and more freed from that by robots. Control and discipline belong to the past. It's a mentality from the industrial age. We are all unique individuals, who love our freedom. To feel tied down and controlled are something that kills inspiration, motivation, and the desire to work. We wish to express ourselves doing what we are good at, and we wish to be included. Today, inspiration, creativity, openness, and

initiative are much more prominent and important. That's why self-employment have been increasingly popular. It offers independence and autonomy. Income is varying and is many times a challenge. There are many kinds of self-employment, Digital Nomad is one and an expression for those who choose to work anywhere with a reliable internet connection. Here is a suggested documentary about this lifestyle; **One Way Ticket: The Digital Nomad Documentary**.

The future is about controlling as much as possible yourself, without having a boss telling you what to do. Structure is needed, but it can be organized in different ways. The role as the boss can be rotated. In a formation of geese, there is not one leader flying in the front all the time. That is too exhausting. All the geese take their turn in the front. Outside of Stockholm, there is a company called **Skaltek**. If you see the large building from above, you can see the contours of a geese formation. They have employed new ways of organizing their company, and at the same time, they have had a strong focus on the employees and their potential as humans. In every human being, there is a huge potential and resources, you might not even be aware of it yourself. Find this, and you and the world will be transformed.

If the employees are given trust and as much freedom as possible to create and contribute to creative solutions, then much would be done. But what you do, need to be meaningful and enjoyable. You must feel appreciated and as a part of the company, and you need to have self-determination. It will be more important in the future to fulfill oneself, in the meaning of expressing one's passion, also in how you earn your living.

The example with round-a-bouts shows how important it is to look at solutions that are already working. There are examples of companies and organizations, who have been organized according to new models. When you have good examples to refer to, you can transfer these new principles to other places. Ricardo Semler is from Brazil and he is using several of these new principles in his companies. His lecture at TED **How to run a company with (almost) no rules** is worth listening to.

In the book, **Reinventing Organizations**, the author Frederic

Laloux gives several examples. Buurtzorg in the Netherlands with 9 000 employees, is one example. Sun Hydraulics in Florida, USA, and FAVI in France are others. Their purpose of working there goes beyond pure profit. The bureaucracy is simplified. Various plans, budgets, analyses etc. are, if needed, done by a team. The flow of information is open and flows freely.

They are not hierarchically managed but more team based. There are no bosses, the decisions are taken out in the field, something that makes decision making faster and clearer. Everybody can make decisions, it's a form of self-management, but everyone affected by the decision must be consulted. The more important the decision is, the more people needs to be consulted. The team members report to the team in its entirety. The teams then report to the other teams.

Self-management, meaning, and entirety are paramount. The employees feel connected to the purpose behind the tasks they perform. This is something that gives meaning and that matters. The employees are regarded as a resource. They are trusted and have gained trust. They have faith in them and their good intentions and they are regarded as whole, responsible, and unique individuals. Places with such a mentality experience a lower degree of absence, and the employees are happier. It turns out that these kinds of companies and organizations get happier customers, more profit, and they are also more robust.

«It's conceivable that in the future the evolutionary purpose, rather than the organization, will become the entity around which people gather. A specific purpose will attract people and organizations in fluid and changing constellations, according to the need of the moment.» - Frederic Laloux, Reinventing Organizations

As a society, we should break the vicious circle based on a hierarchical principle (top-down principle) and go over to a golden circle based on a holistic (circular) and self-organizing principle.

Round-a-bouts have proven that they are more efficient. By the way, a round-a-bout is a circle. The circle can be used in many ways. Tables, for

example. There are good reasons for using round tables. It gives a larger feeling of equality, intimacy and no one stands out as the boss or ends up in a corner. No one is in front of you. No one is behind you. No one is above you. No one is below you. The circle is designed to create unity. Due to this, I would believe that round tables will be used more in the future. This will have a signal effect.

Also, the political landscape could use being organized in new ways. They are also captured by the old ways of doing things. Women, for example, constitute half of the world's population, but there are only a few places in the world where the political positions are somewhat equally divided between the sexes, like here in the Nordic countries. Originally, politicians are for the people and thus, shall serve them, but instead, there are many around the world who have gotten their positions because they seek power, fame, and money.

An American movement called **The Network of Spiritual Progressives** works for changes in politics and other human areas, both there and in the rest of the world.

In the future, neither economic nor religious special interests should have any influence whatsoever on politics (or that some of these sectors gain an unhealthy influence over each other, as previously mentioned). Then politicians with high morals are needed, who set their egos aside naturally for the benefit of those they shall serve. Those politicians are going to step forward. It will happen, it's just a matter of time as increasingly more individuals evolve. It's easy math, when individuals evolve the world evolve.

«... the salvation of this human world lies nowhere else than in the human heart, in the human power to reflect, in human meekness, and human responsibility. Without a global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness, nothing will change for the better...» - Vaclav Havel

Politics and religion can and should be separated from each other. This is a very important topic and I will elaborate on it a little further. It should

not be possible for one religion, in particular, to decide or have influence on behalf of other beliefs or the opinion of others. When the opinions of others are not taken into consideration, there will be no impact. This leads to a lack of respect, separation, and this will, in turn, lead to frustration and ultimately to actions of violence, like terrorism. Those with power might use all kinds of dictatorial methods, as seen in the attempted coup in Turkey in the summer of 2016. Fear and power to keep other opinions under control were used. According to *The Committee to Protect Journalists*, at least 81 journalists are imprisoned in Turkey in 2016, and that's highest in the world.

You cannot separate spirituality from politics. Politics reflects our moral. All political parties have one opinion or other (moral) about how things should be and be done. And moral comes from our spirituality, what we believe in (this could be anything). When our spirituality develops (our moral, attitudes, values, belief systems, philosophies of life, and convictions), we will develop, and the political world will be reflected accordingly.

Brief summary: *Politics are spirituality in practice.*

Now, it might come in handy with an explanation about being religious and being spiritual. To be spiritual doesn't mean to be religious. There are prominent and important differences. It's quite simple. To be religious is to profess to a religion or sect. To be spiritual is not to profess to a religion, but nonetheless, have a conviction about something divine. A religion, where the world religious come from, has outer frames like dogma, rules, and teachings based on the opinion of others, telling the supporters how to live and behave. When you are spiritual, you are free to think, experience, explore and decide your beliefs on your own, as well as having the possibility to change and expand it. Said in other words, religion claims that their way is the only true and correct way (with The Bahá'í faith as a rare exception), while spirituality claim that there are many rivers leading to the same ocean. When conflicts arise, religion far too often leads to disunity, while spirituality unite. In my opinion, religions (which represent the old) will lose ground in the industrialized world and spirituality (which represents the new) will gain

ground. That's why, in my opinion, those old religions, like Christianity, are «exported» to less developed and informed countries, just like the tobacco industry did when their sales dropped.

Religion regards divinity as something external, something outside yourself and, generally, the paradisiacal life after death is only for those who profess to their religion. To be spiritual means that divinity is integrated in you. You look at the universe, the world, man, and everything living as divine and holy, and you believe that there is a life after death for EVERYONE. While religion is more masculine oriented, spirituality is more balanced and life is regarded as cycles, also the human being. There are no dogmas or rules telling you how to be or behave. It's your own moral conviction and intuition (your gut feeling), which guides you.

Wouldn't it be nice if politics (as well as the rest of society) was controlled by such principles? If you cannot believe in something divine or spiritual, that's fine, but politics should in the future be controlled by higher moral principles; like respect for all humans, as well as nature. Further, politics should be based on the understanding that we all depend on and are deeply connected to each other. Politics should move away from the unhealthy and strong polarization we see today. This would result in politics with a long-term perspective, unlike today's short-term politics. A suggestion for specialization is to read the book *Sacred America, Sacred World* by **Stephen Dinan**. Also, the book, *Spiritual Politics* written by Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson is recommended, even if it is some year since its publication. More about them on their homepage **The Center for Visionary Leadership**. *Healing the Heart of Democracy* by **Parker J. Palmer** is another one. And yet another one is *The Global Heart Awakens: Humanity's Rite of Passage from the Love of Power to the Power of Love* by **Anodea Judith**. The best-selling author, **Marianne Williamson**, of such self-help books as «A Return to Love» aims to bring more heart and compassion into policy-making. She is one of the initiators of **Sister Giant** which holds seminars around the need for a politics with a more holistic, spiritual dimension. The database **FuturePolicy.org** is also worth checking out. Their online database

shares existing good and effective solutions based on long-term thinking, so that we can deliver a healthier planet and a fairer society to our kids and grandchildren.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle based on short-term thinking, like the way politics are handled, and go over to a golden circle, based on a long-term thinking, like the cycles of nature show us.

It is said that you can measure how far a society has come in its development by the way we treat the «weakest» among us. Again, it is obvious that we need to do something about what we believe in and work with ourselves, by this I mean heighten our consciousness and thereby our moral, so that there are better conditions for the «weakest» in the future. As these chapters show, good basis are needed to build and organize our future society. The fact that new ways of organizing, controlled by and based on new and more holistic and sustainable principles, shows that we as a society are developing. They are very important examples, because they make way for a more forward-looking, sustainable, and humane society.

Chapter 12

Living community

«We are only as strong as we are united, and as weak as we are divided.»

- J. K. Rowling

We, humans, have a universal longing to be accepted and seen, a longing to love and be loved. We, humans, are social beings. To belong to a community is important, and can influence both the mental and the physical health. During the Vikings, the hardest punishment you could get was to be sentenced to be an outlaw. Then you were completely outside society, and nobody could have anything to do with you. The individual in question also risked being killed by random. Not exactly a nice destiny. In a way, we practice the same method today. People who make serious crime, risk being sent to isolation in jail. Many regard this as torture. There is an underlying fear in all criminal actions if you dig deep enough. Why not treat the fear instead of using punishment? We need protection from them, yes, but it's far better to take care of them, work with their underlying issues and treat them humanely.

The way society is organized today, many feel lonely and isolated, even if they live in the middle of a large city with millions of inhabitants. So, not belonging to a community that cares about you or otherwise not feeling that you are seen or cared for, might lead to health problems, and shorten your life expectancy, which is pointed out so clearly in the documentary *The Swedish theory of love*, mentioned earlier. The question is;

can we organize the society in another way so that we can recreate community?

In the chapter «Loneliness poison the body» from the book *Mind Over Medicine* by Lissa Rankin, you can read about the remote village of Roseto in Pennsylvania, USA. A group of Italians settled here in 1882, and they made a conclave recreating their homeland. In 1961, Dr. Stewart Wolf, a professor at the medical faculty at the University of Oklahoma, was advised about the place when the local doctor had noted that the death toll for all diseases was much lower than the national average. He decided to find out why. A small excerpt from the chapter mentioned says: Malcolm Gladwell reported in *Outliners* that John Bruhn, a sociologist hired to help with the examinations, said that: *«There were no suicides there, no alcoholism, no drug abuse and very little crime. There was no one in need of social assistance. Among other things, we looked at the occurrence of ulcers. They had no cases there either. These people died of high age. That's it.»*

If we could create a functioning society for everybody, that could be a model for the future, it would be an advantage to look at what has proven to be a success. It might, therefore, be worth taking a closer look at the little, Italian village Roseto. Dr. Wolf did just that. Several interesting things were discovered. They did not eat particularly healthy, and neither were they in particularly good shape. Further examination ruled out the genes, the local climate, the drinking water, and the hospital. Finally, he concluded that a tightly connected, supportive society was a better indicator of the health of the heart than the cholesterol level and use of tobacco. He also concluded that isolated individuals might easily be overwhelmed by the many everyday challenges and that this might trigger stress reactions in the body. But an individual surrounded by a supportive community can relax. This form of relaxation is transformed into positive impacts on the physiology of the body and prevents diseases.

The people in Roseto lived mostly in generation housing. They took care of each other, and no one was left alone or had to handle their problems alone. The work ethics were high even if the work was heavy. They felt they had a purpose in life. They had extended contact with each

other. They had fixed, common evening rituals, where they had classical Italian celebration with plenty of good food and wine. Holidays were celebrated with festive parties.

At the end of the 70s, this tightly connected community had dissolved and the occurrence of diseases had increased. For example, the statistic of deadly heart attacks had reached the national average. When younger generation went away to study, they returned with them new ideas, dreams, and people who changed the society. A chapter of the book describes what happened:

«These changes lead to the end of generations living together, and the lifestyle of the local community went from social gatherings each evening to the more widespread «every man to himself» -philosophy, that permeated the nearest towns. Neighbors who used to visit each other regularly and uninvited started to phone in advance to make agreements. The evening rituals where the adults sang and the kids played games, changed into evenings in front of the television.»

As a society, we should break the vicious circle based on the thought that everything is separated and go over to a golden circle, involving an understanding that everything is connected, and where everything and everyone is one.

I mean that creating a living community is the way to create a more humane society in the future. Yes, we have communities today, but are they living? Some might be, like certain religious, secular, or spiritual communities, further some organizations or associations etc. Others are not. Big cities with their skyscrapers do not invite togetherness and community. Many of the massive, impersonal skyscraper areas are quiet. There is not much life there when everyone has returned home after work. An increasing number of city planners and architects have understood that this needs to be addressed. It's worth taking a look at an architect company called **Vincent Callebaut Architectures**. They have some futuristically, organic projects based on design from nature, function, and community.

Green areas and areas facilitated for common activities etc. show up

all over the world. Residential areas are planned and designed in new and more holistic ways. An example is a large building complex in Singapore, with a total of 1040 residential units. Instead of many, traditional high-rise blocks, they built many low ones' crisscross atop one another, totally 31 blocks in a hexagonal pattern. The architects are OMA/Ole Scheeren and a lecture by Ole on this and other projects are to be found at TED **Why great architecture should tell a story**. The complex is called *The Interlace* and the reason for the name is that it shall reflect the intention of creating connections, community and stimulate mingling among the habitants.

More recommended TED Talks about community building is **Buildings that blend nature and city** by Jeanne Gang, where she uses architecture to build relationships, and **Architecture that's built to heal** by Michael Murphy where he and his team uses a holistic approach that produces community.

Another example is an apartment complex in London called **The Collective**. They are transforming an abandoned office building into one of the world's largest experiments in living together. The project is directed towards younger people, who are not so concerned about owning things nor have much money (London is an expensive city to live in). Sharing economy is also a part of the concept, and it's one of the reasons it won't be so expensive to live there. They have been inspired by the old days and the way they created communities back then. If you want to look at other interesting projects, the web portal **Inhabitat** is recommended.

In Oslo, there exists a nursing home for people with dementia. It is called Manglerudhjemmet and is privately owned. Here, they have managed to create a far more living community than what's common for nursing homes. They have, with the help of simple means, enthusiasm and community spirit, decorated a pub, restaurant, grocery shop, and spa. They have even brewed their own beer. All this have created so much joy, and when the elderly arrives at the pub, they no longer have bad hips. They enter the bar stools as if they were young again! By the way, the use of medication has dropped around 40 %. Another nursing

home, which are owned by the local government and which has much of the same, like bar, restaurant, and shop, have similar results.

Let us return to existing societies from where we can get some inspiration. Bjoern Grinde has written a Norwegian book called *The Human Zoo*. Here he describes several societies experimenting on new ways to live. He is especially after the ones who could create a feeling of community and happiness for life. He has traveled around the world to visit them. As he said himself, he wanted to find good societies, good alternatives, showing that it is possible to build a community based on friendliness, where the use of resources is sustainable and the humans still are content.

His travels took him to **Hurdal ecovillage** in Norway, **Damanhur** in Italy, **Auroville** in India, **Findhorn** in Scotland, the Ark-monastery in France, **ZEGG** in Germany, **Tamera** in Portugal, nature people in Africa and several other places. He brings analyses full of insight as to how these lives are lived in these places compared to our lives in our industrialized world. His impressions are that people living in well-functioning ecovillages are happier than the average inhabitant of the large community.

I have been to two of these places. Hurdal ecovillage is one of them and is the most well-known ecovillage in Norway. There are plans for more. Recently there was a series on NRK (Norway national TV channel) about this place. It shows that it is not simple and easy to start a life in an ecovillage, something Bjoern Grinde also points at in his book. But overall, you can create a well-functioning society, where people take care of each other in a community. If we manage to get something that's like the village of Roseto, then we have come a long way.

I visited Damanhur in Italy in 2004. This is a significantly larger eco-society with around 1000 inhabitants, and it has existed since the middle of the 70s. It is a spiritual community emphasizing art and creativity. They have, for instance, built an incredible temple under the ground that literarily will make your mouth drop. They have called it **Temples of Humankind** and it has its own homepage and its own **virtual site**.

Damanhur is so large that it is divided into several smaller communities. My traveling companion and I had the pleasure of eating dinner one night in such a community. It was a lovely experience. And I do not talk about the dinner because I cannot remember anything of what I ate from the abundant dinner table. What I am talking about is the community that I felt included in during dinner. These are Italians, like the ones living in the village of Roseto, so the talk was lively. The community feeling made me want for more, and I can understand that such living communities are of great importance. It is probably a prerequisite for such societies to exist and develop.

Other well-known ecovillages or communities are **Ithaca**, not far from New York and **Sekem** in Egypt. If you want to know more about ecovillages, you can visit **The Global Ecovillage Network**. They have an excellent **map function**, displaying the many hundreds of ecovillages around the world.

There is also a village in Spain, worthy of a closer inspection. Marinelada in Andalucia has around 2700 inhabitants, and little crime or unemployment. The place is based on a socialistic mindset and where the strongest focus is on those who have least. You can even have a house built for free, which you can use for a very low monthly rent, below 25 dollars (yes, you read correctly). But it cannot be sold again for private profit if you want to move. Marinelada neither has police nor priests. The community takes care of conflicts, and democratic processes are executed with the help of a people assembly.

The village of Ogimi in Okinawa, Japan, is also worth to take a closer look at. Here, they have the world's highest number of 100-year old's in relation to the population (some research ranks Ogimi on the top). Beautiful nature surrounds the village, with the coast to one side and mountains on the other. In such relaxing environments, many elderly live by themselves, but they are not alone. The small community is based on mutual consideration. The young, which mostly have moved to larger cities, comes frequently on visits with their children. And the elderly is included in happenings and festivals, which they participate actively in. Traditions and customs are taken care of. There are several common

features between Roseto and Ogimi.

We have much to learn from natural societies or traditional societies, while it is certain aspects of these societies which we, fortunately, have left behind. The modern society also has several, obvious benefits. The author **Jared Diamond** has published a book called *The world until Yesterday – what we can learn from traditional societies*. The book reveals that these types of societies develop lifelong bonds and loneliness is not a problem. Further that people spend their whole life at, or nearby, the place they were born, surrounded by relatives and childhood friends. It is also revealed that in smaller, traditional societies no one is stranger to one another.

On the other side, those who lived in the traditional societies stated several reasons as to why they wanted to leave; they wanted the benefits of the modern society like matches, clothes, running water, electricity, soft beds, umbrellas etc. When it comes to non-material benefits they wanted education, jobs, medical treatment, more access to information, larger variety of people, anonymity etc.

Further, the book has this to say about the modern society of today: In populous, industrial societies the risk of loneliness is a chronic problem. When we say that we *«feel alone in a crowded room»*, it's not only empty words but a basic reality for many Americans and Europeans living in large cities and working with people they hardly know. People in western societies often move great distances and their children and friends do the same. So, the chance of ending your life in close approximately to close relatives or childhood friends is quite small. Most of the people you meet are strangers and will stay that way. Children normally leave the house of their parents and establish their own when they get married or financial independent. An American friend of mine, who spends a lot of his time in Africa, sums it up like this:

«Life in Africa is poor in material goods and social/emotional rich, while life in America is rich in material goods and social/emotional poor.»

The author also cites persons he knows, who together with their children have grown up in traditional societies before moving to the USA. They mentioned that they spent a lot of time outdoors, played and

were together with other kids, while American children don't spend much time with others because they sit home and watch TV or play computer games. Another said that people in the USA needed to be entertained because they didn't know how to entertain themselves. Further, there was a kid who said that when you need something in Africa, you make it yourself, and therefore you know how it is assembled and how it works. If you need something in the USA, you go out and buy it, and you have no idea about how it is assembled. Yet another one says that American children are less creative than children from New Guinea because everything is made for them. The list goes on. Children from traditional societies smile more often, they are better in sharing, and they have more freedom because American children had a lot of rules, laws, and restrictions. It was, for instance, forbidden to climb trees.

They have found that people in the stone age had much more freedom than modern man. The modern man is almost captured in a treadmill. You must work a lot to support your lifestyle and pay your house loan and other debt. Many have, therefore, lost their ability to balance work and play or other forms of relaxation. We also need to balance our use of smartphones. They have made the connection to people all over the world easy, but at the same time, we are so deep into our phones that we almost forget the people close to us, even if they are sitting right next to us.

We must try to see the whole picture. There are levels of development that we go through as humanity and society, just like we do as individuals. I believe that the road to take is not to move back to traditional/natural societies, but to try to find and implement the best from both worlds. Here, the experimental societies previously mentioned comes to play, like eco-societies. The art is to keep the modern facilities we have gotten used to and develop them so they are based on the principles of nature and cycles, while we one way or another manage to implement the living communities of the natural societies. I don't worry that we are not going to make it, it's just a matter of *when* we are getting there. When it comes to this intersection, we go towards somewhat questionable and uncertain, but at the same time exciting, fascinating and interesting times.

Chapter 13

The power of a positive focus

«Change your thoughts and you change your world.»

- Norman Vincent Peale

Do you feel inspired or uplifted when you watch the daily news? I think very few of us walk around with a smile, to put it that way. Especially the tabloid media has often had widely publicized articles about accidents, misery, and insignificant news. Sometimes I get the feeling that the worse things are, the better the media thinks it is. Accidents and crises around the world might get a little attention, but is it necessary to exaggerate the focus on crises and other negative news?

It's great when positive things are happening in our lives. We all experience that. It gives inspiration, joy, hope, and it also gives us a reason to celebrate. We would rather have more of this in our lives than all the negative and depressing stuff. Isn't it logical that this is also true for the rest of the world? When you look at the media today, you get the impression that there are crises and problems everywhere, but there are also plenty of positive things going on, a lot more than negative ones. The case is that, for some reason or other, several of these get below the «radar», they are under-communicated. Thus, the image we get off the world is not entirely correct.

Why should negative news get so much more attention than positive news? It should have been the other way around. As the world is now, we need something new and positive to strive for, something that lifts

and brings hope, not more of what only gives us a feeling of powerlessness, puts us down and makes us paranoid. Those are the feelings we get when there is too much negativity. It loses its effect and we risk being indifferent. At its best, and in small doses, negative news might help to create more empathy and engagement.

It's nice and important to write about injustices and imbalances, and it's important, to a certain degree, to write about accidents and other miseries. But is it necessary to have such wide publicity? Is it necessary to exaggerate that much? Does the daily news need to turn into daily killing news? Isn't it enough with just a little information? Is it necessary to write about a murder to such a great extent, with such details and for so long? Is this something that lifts the human spirit? All in all, I feel that most people agree that when this kind of negativity is spread around, it will only lead to unnecessary sufferings and negative consequences.

Take, for example, terrorism, which receives plenty of media attention, this even though the *Global Terrorism Database* shows there has become increasingly fewer fatalities in terror attacks in Europe the past 45 years. To put it in perspective, in our part of the world, it is 500 times more likely to be killed in a traffic accident than in a terror attack. These incidents should be downplayed in the media, otherwise, we are just running the errands of the terrorist by spreading more fear. The media should instead, focus on the causes behind the terror attacks. This could contribute to prevention. In well-functioning societies, like the ones in the Nordic countries, there are fewer incidents of these kinds, because there simply isn't much cause. We have more equality when it comes to opportunities, more even wages, freedom of religion, not been involved in too many wars, not invaded other countries (which easily creates hate and therefore might backfire), a well-functioning democracy and so on.

It's well known that violence creates more violence. And the exaltation of violence seen in movies and computer games, cannot possibly do any good to the human psyche, especially not when you are young and extra impressionable. An example that emphasizes self-reinforcing mechanisms is, for instance, science fiction movies, novels, and other books about the future. Too often they are apocalyptic. In

many ways, they reflect how the society might look if we don't change our direction (some places already look that way). A direction I don't think anyone wants to take. On the other side, those writing these science fiction stories and movies don't always realize the human potential or understands the vastness of the soul. As more and more humans evolve, we will get past those apocalyptic potentials towards something positive that's beyond our imagining. Today, we are in a process going from an unstable and chaotic period to a lot more stable and humane society soon (a few generations). To help us make such a desirable future, a more positive approach would be better. We need something that brings hope and optimism. Star Trek series and movies do partly reflect this. The adventure movie *Tomorrowland - A World Beyond* from 2015 by Disney, gives a more optimistic picture of the future. For the time being it's on Netflix.

Is it not only natural, logic and sensible to imagine that if we give more room for beneficial, positive, and loving ideas and thoughts they will spread like rings in water, with subsequent joys and positive consequences?

What goes around comes around – All actions have an effect. It's like the first law of thermodynamics in physics. Energy cannot disappear, it can only go from one form to the other. Neither does our thoughts, emotions and actions disappear into nothing. There are consequences. Negative thoughts, emotions, and actions spread one kind of vibration, while positive thoughts, emotions, and actions spread another.

There is a well-known story about an old Indian, who was talking to his grandchildren. He said:

- *There are two, fighting wolves living inside all of us. One is evil. This is anger, fear, envy, jealousy, greed, arrogance, self-pity, lies, and selfishness.*

The other one is good. This is joy, peace, love, hope, calm, humility, goodwill, empathy, truth, and trust.

- *Which wolf wins? asked the grandchildren.*

- *The one you feed, answered the old Indian.*

It's not about displacing or neglect the «negative wolf» in us, but rather acknowledge, process, transform and release it so that it becomes

a lesser and lesser part of us. Then it will be easier and more natural to turn the focus towards the «positive wolf», which also includes willpower, courage, care, endurance, and other characteristics until these things are implemented in us. By having an exaggerated and unnecessary focus on the negative sides without constructive goals, these elements are reinforced and the transformation process will be slower. A current example of this was the US presidential election of 2016. The republican candidate, Donald Trump, who, as I see it, represented the «negative wolf». He received a lot of media attention, based on sensation and entertainment (and because media need to sell and they think that kind of stuff sells) and this has only worked to reinforce and increase his popularity. Donald Trump is no longer a president candidate but in fact the leader of the most powerful nation on earth. Maybe the media should not feed that kind of wolf?

In a recent study from the University of Southampton, England (by professor Denise Baden), over 2 000 respondents were asked to evaluate their mood before and after reading negative stories. They found a higher level of worries, anxiety, pessimism, and lack of motivation after the stories than before. This means that negativity also has an impact on the mental health. Her findings also show that those who are exposed to negative histories are less inclined to promote their view, donate to charity or do something concrete to create a better world. On the other hand, her study shows that positive histories have the opposite effect. She meant that if we should present the problems the world is facing, we should do it from a more positive angle.

It's not easy to spot the consequences of negative news. Pollution, on the other hand, is something everyone can see. But the effect negative news has on the human psyche is probably greater than we think. Since the effect is «invisible» and difficult to calculate, it is not regarded as important when it comes to health. Feel for yourself whether you are affected. If you feel drained of energy, fear is creeping in, or you are worried or stressed by what you consume of media content, it would be advantageous to switch focus to something that makes you excited, happy and alive. This will have a positive effect on your health, and it

will «infect» others.

Fortunately, we have a great variety of medias, giving us more choices than just a few years back. Unfortunately, there are too much bad to choose between, and way too many commercials. I think that much of what is presented today is not of a good quality and many times it is directed towards the lowest in us, and truth be told, this side of us is what the media too many times aim at. Wouldn't it be great if the media turned to the best in us?

I understand that newspapers must sell and that TV channels must have something to live on. But must it be at the expense of man? Is it necessary to play that much on fear? Does profit need to be in control, and not what's best for man? It's exactly such short-term profit-hunting which contributes to our long-term crises we as humans and the earth are facing today. Wouldn't it be great if we started to focus on what's best for us? That we thought less about profit and more long-term, to the best for man and earth? And that the focus was not only on the problems but also on the solutions?

As a society, we should break the vicious circle based on a negative focus and go over to a golden circle based on a positive focus.

From all of this, we can draw the conclusion that the logical solution would be to reinforce the positive trend happening around the world on all fields. Media plays an important role here and has a responsibility amid it all. Wouldn't it be great if they had articles about positive things that take place in the society? Yes, how great it would be if they had a specific appendix about positive things? Designated programs on radio and TV. Yes, positive news could be a new trend. Utopia? I don't think so. I think we arrive at a point where people are tired (many have arrived there already) of today's media. I am convinced that at some point, positivity will conquer new grounds. We can, fortunately, already see tendencies.

The world does not get better by extensively publishing negative news. When it is presented, it should be constructive. I would, on the

other hand, claim that the world would be better if we had a positive approach. What we focus on and put our energy into, will be reinforced. Do we want to focus on the negative or the positive? Negativity breeds negativity. Positivity breeds positivity. The choice should be simple. We can choose to support the type of media focusing on negativity or we can choose something else and more positive. It's just like food. Eating junk food is not healthy for the body in the long run. It might taste good, but you might not feel as good afterward. If junk food is not good for us, maybe the same is true for junk media?

It also seems like media has a knack for creating commotion. This way they get something to show, as well as write about. When media has debates or present views, it's often based on polarization. A person with a specific view must normally argue and debate with someone who has the opposite view. Since this is not always done in a constructive way, media should go over to using dialogue instead, which is a more respectful way of conducting exchanges of views. But it might not bring as much attention, nor enough money. This is how it goes when we have a society based on profit. The language of the giraffe might be one way to go (**Nonviolence communication**). This form of communication has been named after the giraffe because the animal's long neck gives it an overview, the large ears make it a good listener, and the big heart gives it empathy.

This polarization that's so prominent today, and which gets so much media attention, has its roots in an outdated war mentality, where the talk is about how to fight the «enemy». It's us against them. It's clearly seen in politics. The deep roots are nurtured by an ancient separation mentality, where man is single individuals separated from each other and nature, and where competition is the driving force. This is the old story that still has a strong influence on the world. The new story, which we can build a future world upon, should be based on unity and compassion rather than separation and indifference.

Mindlessly consuming medias stuff about greed, hate, traumas, madness, rawness, gossip, crises, accident, and criminality is not good for the soul. It seems to me that this stuff is as addictive as sugar is for

the body. We don't feel uplifted by good feelings after consuming all of this. Everybody has a responsibility. We can start by being conscious when it comes to what kind of media we choose to consume.

It is said that we have power as consumers, for instance when it comes to what we buy in the shop. A while back in Norway, there was a very successful campaign against palm oil. The palm oil is not good for the rainforest nor for the health. Maybe there should have been similar campaigns against the strong, negative focus in the media? A campaign that would emphasize the importance of a positive focus?

I think there is a misunderstanding that positive news holds no interest and that it's impossible to make a profit on them. We love news. Why shouldn't we be interested in positive ones? For example, about our future? Take Tesla; they have launched electrical cars and other revolutionary products. They experience huge attention. The founder, Elon Musk, says that even if their car division is small as mice, they get the attention of an elephant.

I think the world hunger for positive news. Just like fossil energy sources have reached their peak and are now replaced by renewable energy sources all over the world, I think the negative focus of the media today is about to reach its peak and soon will turn toward a greater focus on positivity. This is needed to give the world inspiration and hope. There are an incredibly large number of positive, engaging and creative things that's happening around the world. These things deserve plenty of attention. In the future, this would open unfathomable possibilities for all of us.

There are already media focusing on positivity. Here are some of them:

In London, there is a media cooperative called **Positive News**. They say this about themselves on their web page: *Positive News is the constructive journalism magazine offering quality journalism with a focus on progress and possibilities. In addition to being owned by our readers and journalists all over the world, Positive News is also the first global media cooperative and movement financed by the help of crowdfunding.*

A similar (**Positive News**), but smaller online newspaper, is based in

the USA.

A couple of magazines: **YES!**, **GOOD** and **The Optimist Daily**.

The American online newspaper *The Huffington Post* has several sections covering different aspects that are positive, transformative and uplifting like **Good News**, **The Power Of Humanity**, **What's Working: Purpose + Profit**, **Philanthropy**, **Corporate Social Responsibility** and **Social Change**.

Other large media have also started with good stories of the positive kind. It seems like it's about to become the norm. Here are a few examples: Today (**Good news**), Reddit (**Uplifting News**), Fox News (**Good News**), The Telegraph (**Good News**), Mirror (**Feel-Good News**).

Small organizations and single individuals are, in general, faster than large media, when it comes to catching the vibes of the society. In this group, there are quite a few who have a focus on positive, and constructive, news and good stories. Some of these are; **Upworthy**, **Good News Network**, **Good News Shared**, **Collective Evolution** (and their upcoming CE news), **Shift**, **Atlas of the Future** and **Gaia**.

A large web page and organization called **TED** should also be mentioned. We have referred to them previously in this book. They are non-commercial and their goal is to spread ideas in form of short lectures (around 18 minutes), which are filmed and then made available on their web page. They cover almost every topic, from science to business and global issues, on over 100 languages. A smaller, similar organization can also be mentioned, it's called **PechaKucha**. Pecha Kucha is a presentation form and cultural arrangement where the program consists of up to 12-14 short multimedia presentations. Each participant can show 20 images, but they can only use 20 seconds on each one. The topics cover a wide specter of features. Yet another similar concept can be mentioned briefly. It's called **Ignite** and is a little like Pecha Kucha.

Chapter 14

What can you and I contribute with?

«Personal transformation can and does have global effects... The revolution that will save the world is ultimately a personal one.»

- Marianne Williamson

In the introduction, I mentioned that we cannot escape change, both on a personal and collective level if we want to solve our problems. We need large, structural changes. I am particularly thinking about changes on a deeper level. Changes which have a lasting impact. This is the main point of this book. If not, we only repair the symptoms without solving the underlying problems. It's, as previously mentioned, like going to the dentist to repair new holes (the symptoms). If we want to avoid or limit this in the future, we need to make changes to our lifestyle, like reduce the consumption of sugar. This is a simple and obvious example.

The current level of consciousness is not high enough, it must be increased since it is this current level that has created our dysfunctional world. Albert Einstein understood this, and several others both before and now have also understood. It's when you climb higher that you get the necessary perspective.

If the analogy about the holes in the teeth can be transferred to the problems the humans have created today, the holes in the teeth would be equivalent to our environmental problems. Everybody understands that we cannot go on as before and just try to smooth it over. The problems would only multiply. The cause behind hole in the teeth was

not making any lifestyle changes. The cause of our global problems is that our level of consciousness is too low, making us continue as before without making changes. Self-development is needed to make changes, both on a personal and collective level.

«If you want to awaken all of humanity, then awaken yourself. If you want to eliminate suffering in the world, then eliminate all that is dark and negative in yourself. Truly, the greatest gift you have to give is that of your own self-transformation.»

- Lao Tzu

It's both good and necessary to go over to economy bulbs, economy shower, heat pumps or drive and electrical car etc., but what really counts is to upgrade yourself. Then we start talking. Then we have reached the core of the problems. If all men and women had increased their level of consciousness, so that everyone regarded everybody else as family, much would have been solved. If countries did the same, we would have world peace. The case is that we all *are* a part of the same, large family. Before we came to this world, we were one. We are still one, but we have just forgotten it. We didn't show up on earth out of nothing. If everybody had been treated as a member of the same family, most of our problems would automatically have disappeared. If we regarded the earth as a living planet and treated her with respect, we would be going in the right direction.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle where everything is looked upon from a lower conscious level and go over to a golden circle, where we look upon everything from a higher conscious level.

«Until we have met the monsters in ourselves, we keep trying to slay them in the outer world. And we find that we cannot. For all the darkness in the world stems from darkness in the heart. And it is there that we must do our work.»

- Marianne Williamson

The new American president Donald Trump is, in my opinion, a typical example of someone trying to slay the monsters he believes are in the outer world. But the monsters are not there, but in Trump's own heart, and in them who cheer him on, as well as in most other humans (to a lesser or greater degree). He exposes and brings out the dark side, the shadow, the monsters in ourselves. You could, in a way, say that's good because then they step into the light and we can do something about them. We only need to make sure not to give the monsters and the following polarization, too much room. Because If that happens, it might end up as bad as history has already shown.

As said before; Fear contracts and love expands. President Donald Trump aims to build walls, both physically (Mexico) and non-physically (protectionism for example). I am afraid many of those who voted for Trump are the ones who will feel most negative effects. Why not look at countries that have another approach, like Canada. They happily admit more than 300 000 immigrants a year, nearly 1 % of its population—a higher proportion than any other big, rich country—and has done so for two decades. Its system of private sponsorship, in which groups of citizens take responsibility for supporting refugees during their first year, not only helps them adapt but encourages society at large to make them welcome.

Here is something you can do to develop as a human being:

Develop your empathy, talk with other people, and try to put yourself in their place. Go for a walk in nature, use it and learn about it. Take a break and go inwards, meditate. Practice openness, honesty, and love. Teach yourself to see the best in others, and to see love in others, and not to mention, in yourself. Learn about yourself. Learn something new, attend a course. Do something unexpected. Listen to inspirational music, and watch uplifting movies, and read a book or two about self-development. Smile, love and spread some happiness. Take off from work, and do something you have always dreamed about doing. Travel and experience the world, go outside the beaten track. Cry a tear or two. Read some near-death experiences, learn about the universe and study history. Seek

out and spend time with wise people. Think for yourself. Reflect on the miracles of synchronicity happening in your life. Use more colors. Make some art. Be good to yourself, and not just others. Write a poem or a meaningful article in the newspaper. Help someone in need. Visit someone from another culture (especially important in our multicultural society). Laugh until you cry. Give of yourself to others.

We can go even deeper to work with ourselves (inner work). We can go to the core itself and try to find out what's there. The goal is for us to be whole and in balance. Let go of locked up emotions, it's preventive for the health and gives a richer and freer life. You are the one who creates your reality, which is created by your spirituality, your belief systems, mindset, and experience. This is decided by how you regard yourself and the world, and thus how you live your life here on earth. But all this can be changed. Decode yourself from old, narrow-minded religious dogmas left from an outdated knowledge, and learn about death and life once more. What's stopping you from living an amazing life? Are you happy? Do all the aspects of your life work as they should? Many of us have something that's not working. Much is due to ballast from a previous life, and not to forget programming from childhood.

Since we were kids, we have been indoctrinated with strange stuff without any truth, like sin and shame, that we are not good enough or valuable enough. Are some of this still left in your system? We are not born sinful, and we have nothing to be ashamed about. Do you believe that you will be judged by other when you enter afterlife? What you do have, of course, consequences for yourself and others, and those consequences must be balanced, but that doesn't mean that you will be punished. No, the universe is permeated with unconditional love. The only one who will judge you is you, and we are good at this. Are you afraid of something? That there is a hell? Of course, there isn't. Hell, is a human construction and is nothing that exists in the ultimate reality. Do you love yourself, also when life is tough, and don't go according to your plan? (Perhaps there may be deeper reasons why things happen?) Or do you judge yourself in those situations? It is a prerequisite to love yourself before you can love others. Is there something you want to

forgive yourself? The universe loves you endlessly and unconditionally, not matter what happens and what you do. Why shouldn't you do the same?

The importance of dealing with your own problems and do something about them is invaluable. If you want examples, you can watch the documentary about **Tony Robbins** – *I am not your guru* – which you can find, for the time being, on Netflix. In his seminar, which the documentary is based on, he takes selected persons in the audience and works directly with them to unravel and solve problems that are bothering them. Not everyone would like his directness and partly offensive phraseology, and you can question the large amounts of money he is paid to participate in those seminars. On the other hand, this has given him the opportunity to be a philanthropist and he supports and initiate programs all over the world, among them food to millions.

Some might have seen the movie *Inception* on the cinemas some years ago. To a certain degree, this movie also points out a few of the previous sections. The goal in the movie is to plant a new idea into a person's subconsciousness to change the current idea the person has. To do this, they must enter a common dream world. This is complicated stuff because while they are in this dream world they must go into a new dream, and then yet another dream. To plant the new idea, they must pass three «dream levels». The point of the comparison is to illustrate that you need to go deep to *really* change dysfunctional and fake constructions of thoughts hidden in our psyche, where it creates problems. Therefore, many complain that positive thinking doesn't help in the long run. This is because they have not transformed the underlying unconscious manipulative thinking patterns. They lay deeper than the more superficial thoughts of our daily consciousness.

Another movie we can highlight is **Peaceful Warrior**, based on real events. It follows a man who dreams about the Olympics, but then he is the victim of an accident. By the help of a mentor, he manages to change deep thought patterns so that he can rise again both mentally and physically. The documentary, **The People Vs The State Of Illusion**, is also about how our thought patterns, belief systems, and emotions create

our reality, and how we can strengthen our own force by looking at them and change them.

The poet Rumi says we have two kinds of intelligence, one we acquire and one that already exists:

Two Kinds of Intelligence

There are two kinds of intelligence: one acquired, as a child in school memorizes facts and concepts from books and from what the teacher says, collecting information from the traditional sciences as well as from the new sciences. With such intelligence, you rise in the world. You get ranked ahead or behind others regarding your competence in retaining information. You stroll with this intelligence in and out of fields of knowledge, getting always more marks on your preserving tablets.

There is another kind of tablet, one already completed and preserved inside you. A spring overflowing its spring box. A freshness in the center of the chest. This other intelligence does not turn yellow or stagnate. It's fluid, and it doesn't move from outside to inside through conduits of plumbing-learning. This second knowing is a fountainhead from within you, moving out.

From the translations of Rumi by Coleman Barks.

Never have we had more use of focusing on our inner source, like our inner intelligence and wisdom. It transcends what we learn from outer sources. It's timeless. It is full of love and has a high level of consciousness. When your connection to this source runs freely, and it's reflected in your behavior, then you have become a person with a positive, glowing radiance that can change the world by just being who you are.

It has been said that to change the world you must start with yourself. Therefore, I believe that self-development is very important. This contributes to revealing who we really are. Debbie Ford says something about this:

«Our true treasure is hidden inside us. We unconsciously hide our inner gold behind layers of clay. To reveal the gold, - we must only have the courage to chop away the

outer layer of clay, piece by piece.»

The author, **Eckhart Tolle**, is concerned that we should be aware of our ego so that it loses all power. The ego is a mental construction who is not who you really are. The ego is identification with form. You are much larger and more than that, and you cannot be put in a small box like your or others ego tend to do. Here is an excerpt of one of his books called *A new earth*:

«Sorrow and suffering is a mental and emotional disease created by the ego, and it has achieved epidemic proportions. They are the inner counterpart to the environmental pollution on our planet. Negative conditions like anger, anxiety, hate, grudge, malcontent, jealousy and so on are not recognized as negative, but as completely at its place, neither are they perceived as something you have created by yourself, but as caused by others or by an outer factor. «I hold you responsible for my pain». This is what the ego really says.»

Based on what Eckhart Tolle says, you get a clear understanding of the connection between the environmental pollution in the outer world and the one in the inner world. A logical conclusion is that when you transform (self-develop) the ego, the inner «environmental pollution» will stop automatically.

The outer «environmental pollution» reflects the inner «environmental pollution». And when the inner environmental pollutions stop, the outer environmental pollution will do the same.

We all have aspects of negativity nurturing the ego, as described by Eckhart Tolle. But these aspects are not who you really are. Everybody has the same value, either we have a lot to transform or not. We all consists of the same essence, love. It can be buried deep down or it can flow through us clear and visible. One thing is sure, love is in all of us. It's only a question about how much of the diamond facets we need to polish before it shines in all its beauty.

Some years ago, there was a wave of self-help books about how to love yourself. These books are as important today as back then, and new ones arrive all the time. If you should give something to others, you must

have something to give. If you should give love to others, you must have love in you. It's prerequisite to love yourself before you can love someone else. It's for a reason it's been said that the most important in life is love. Some have also said love is the binding force of the universe that interconnects everything.

A Norwegian author by the name Per Henrik Gullfoss has published many self-help books. One of them would be called in English *You are born to love*. Here is a small excerpt from the book:

«If love is a beautiful garden, then you are a flower and your first task is to be exactly the flower you are, and this way contribute to the beauty of the garden. You can be called a gardener, and the first task is to care for yourself. This might include cutting off broken twigs or process and get rid of bugs that you are exposed to throughout your childhood. To the extent that the flower of love will sprout and unfold in you, it will naturally start spreading its own love to other crops that stand and sway in the winds of the world.»

It's again logic to do a comparison. If it's so that the more love a person has, the more it has to give to others, then the natural conclusion should be that this also goes for nations. The more «love» a country has, the more it can share with others. And the amount of love a country has is determined by the sum of everyone who lives there (unless it is suppressed). If the same principle is true for individuals and nations, then it must also be true for the whole world. This shows the huge impact of the development of the self, personally, nationally, and globally.

When you develop, you expand and have room for more, and thus, you have more to give to the world. Your development creates ripples. We can, thereby, say that one of the most important things we can do for the world is to develop ourselves.

Sometimes it might be wise to get help from psychologists, healers, coaches, or therapists that can help us to tidy up on the inside and help us on the way. There is a lot to choose from. I want to emphasize a few known that work on the deeper psychological levels; **Byron Katie, Marianne Williamson, Esther Hicks, Michael Bernard Beckwith, Panache Desai, Deepak Chopra.**

And not to forget, it's plenty of help to get «from the other side» if we ask for help, trust and have confidence that we will receive it. Then, our intuition can guide us and we can be inspired to take the right choices and thus be presented with unexpected possibilities. Then all we need to do is take them. We probably get more help from «the other side» than we are aware of.

Children are another important element with an enormous impact on the future. This is also an area where most can contribute to changes both at home or school. If the adults of the future should be able to stay out of problems like the ones that we have made, then we must teach our children the true values of life as soon as possible. Some believe that it's enough to send your children to expensive schools, but the most important things in life cannot be bought. You cannot buy empathy, love, and respect. Children do as adults do because they are they idols. If the children see that the main goal of working is to be able to buy material stuff, then they will probably do the same, and then we are inside the vicious circle.

When it comes to education, it's more important than ever to give them the opportunity to find their own truths, as well as to be taught how to be a critical thinker. This is highly necessary when we see what kind of trouble man has caused before and now. If not, we only make them continue our mistakes. It's better that children ask questions about status quo, and are filled with wisdom than being filled up by us with easily forgotten, and not always correct, facts and other knowledge. Knowledge is important, but the exaggerated focus it receives today creates imbalance. It's hard to forget the real values in life, like compassion, love, honesty, respect, responsibility and so on. Further, there should be less focus on homework, test, and exams that create an unhealthy competition with losers and winners, as well as stress and unhappiness. Doesn't a child have value regardless of its grades? I'm only asking some critical questions here. Why not stimulate the children's creativity instead, as well as their artistic abilities?

My impression is that children today get too much homework, many times making their working day longer than their parent's! Should not

children be allowed to be children? Where in the school system should they find time and space for creativity, spontaneity, play and fun? Only in recess? I will again emphasize the importance of encouraging them to find the answer to their questions themselves. Then the children can collect wisdom from their own source, rather than being filled up by unusable knowledge from an outer source. This will contribute to making them into creative beings, instead of small copies of what's already there. As a country, Finland is regarded as having one of **the best schools** in the world. They have implemented some of what have been discussed here. Their school hours are also short and homework is generally light.

Creativity expert **Sir Ken Robinson** challenges the way we're educating our children. In one of his TED talks **How to escape education's death valley**, he tells us how to get out of the educational «death valley» we now face, and how to nurture our youngest generations with a climate of possibility. In fact, his first TED talk **Do Schools Kill Creativity?** is still the most viewed talk in TED's history with 43 million views and counting.

Children are the future, and they shall inherit the earth after us. Therefore, what we teach them is of the utmost importance. Most of us have contact with young ones, and thereby the possibility to help and influence them so that they find a more sustainable and humane direction than what we have today. The kindergartens and **schools of Rudolph Steiner** have long traditions in stimulating the children's creativity and teach them in new ways. Other alternatives are also emerging, like **Lumiar, Educating The New Humanity, The Six Dimension Model, CWG for Parents**.

I am not one to believe that solutions and changes arrive from the top down, quite the contrary. The changes mainly happen at the grassroots level. As Gandhi said: *Be the change you want to see in the world*. The politicians don't have much power if the people are against them. It would be even more powerful if people got together and got organized. When individuals join forces all kinds of things might happen. It has been said that *the organized are uncivilized, while the civilized are unorganized*.

This is true in many ways when you look at the condition of the world. Wouldn't it be great if we could turn it around so that the civilized also was organized? Margaret Mead once said the following:

«Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.»

The organization **Avaaz**, is an example of a successful organization of a small group of people, who, in a very short time, has gained extensiveness and influence. They mostly work with single cases via campaigns to influence decision makers to change their point of view. **Change.org** does much of the same. This partly also goes for **Global Citizens**. Another organization is **Humanity's Team**, they are working more in depth of the society that brings about more deeper and lasting transformation.

A higher level of consciousness must result in action. Slowly, but surely, the level of consciousness on the planet increases and action based on this higher level will follow. There are many ways in which you can contribute to a better world. Some become activists, others reformists and yet others become innovators. All this is necessary to create a world in balance.

We all have our own unique gifts and a role to play in this amazing experience that's life. Each one of us carries an inner impulse to develop, an inner wish to fulfill the possibilities of our hearts. No matter where we are or what skills we have, we can give our gift to this world.

The best you can do to help change the world is to find and practice this unique gift of yours and be a good example to others. You do this by developing yourself to be more caring, loving, compassionate, brave, wise and helping others to be the same.

Chapter 15

GaiaInnovations – for a world in balance

*«The world must have something new to hold on to if it is to release
its grip on the old.»*

- Neale Donald Walsch

Imagine a web portal which gathers, coordinates, and shares innovations, inspirations, ideas, projects, visions, research etc. within all areas of human life all over the world. Everyone shall have access to this portal, as well as the possibility to make contributions.

I have been inspired to create an organization and movement comprising this portal. It has been named **GaiaInnovations** and was launched late in 2016. In fact, it has become two portals.

In addition to the **Innovation portal**, where we wish to shift focus from *problems* to *solutions*, we will also focus on a new worldview, and the core causes behind our crises and problems, and what we can do to transform them, as well as inform about positive news and uplifting stuff. All this shall be collected in another portal called the **Inspiration portal**. One of our main wishes with this portal is to shift focus from *symptoms* to *causes*.

The intention of GaiaInnovations is to shift focus from problems to solutions and from symptoms to causes.

The circle is deliberately used as a symbol in the design, to highlight the meaning of the circle's principles that nature and cycles are built

upon. The circle represents cycles, recycling, infinity, holistic, integration, unity, etc. This is what the organization stands for:

GaiaInnovations - *for a world in balance*

Brief information:

The goal of GaiaInnovations is to contribute with ideas, visions, and solutions that might inspire us and give us hope for the future, as well as finding and transform the real causes of our crises.

In-depth information:

GaiaInnovations is an ideal, independent organization and movement with a purpose of creating balance in the world, by focusing on the core cases behind our crises and how they can be transformed.

We believe that our old ways of thinking cause the crises in the world. These thoughts cause outdated belief systems, attitudes, and moral and are the core causes of our crises.

We will present and inspire to new and updated holistic thoughts and sustainable solutions in all aspects of human life, something that will bring hope, positivity, and optimism.

We will base ourselves on man's accumulated wisdom, creativity, and care, as well as what nature teaches us through cycles, symbiosis, community, and unity.

The main purpose:

Present innovations and inspirations for the future.

Other purposes:

- Identifying the underlying, old, and outdated thoughts that cause the crises in the world.
- Introduce new, updated, and transformed thoughts.
- Inform about the earth, cycles, and the environment.
- Inspire to positivity, hope, and optimism.

GaiaInnovations wish to accelerate the transition from the current dysfunctional world to a functional and sustainable world, illustrated by the points below (all of them are in some degree described in this book):

OLD THOUGHT PATTERNS => *NEW THOUGHT PATTERNS*

Exploited dying planet => *Living, respected planet*

Masculine dominance => *Masculine and feminine balance*

Me and mine => *We and ours*

Nationalism and isolation => *Global unity and togetherness*

Short-term thinking => *Long-term thinking*

Separation and polarization => *Inclusion and synthesis*

Unspirited universe => *Spirited universe*

Trust outer sources => *Trust our own inner source*

Hierarchically structures => *Holistic, self-determining structures*

Indifference and intolerance => *Care and tolerance*

Competition => *Cooperation*

Outer values dominate => *Outer and inner values in balance*

Materialism and profit => *Generosity and sharing*

Duality => *Unity*

Fear => *Love*

Secrecy => *Openness*

The focus for the Innovation portal will be to collect ideas and solutions in 12 sectors of a circle to cover all topics of the human life. The sectors consist of the following ideas:

science, economy, education, spirituality, governance, environment, media, health, justice, relationships, infrastructure, and art.

With such an organization and its two web portals, several things are achieved. Here are some of the most important elements:

Transform the core causes

By going deep and find the core causes of our crises and problems, we will understand them and why they have occurred. Thereby, we get the

possibility to transform them and thus create the possibility for the world we are dreaming about.

Focus on solutions and positivity

Much of the focus in the society today is on crises and problems. We want to direct the focus on innovations, inspirations, ideas, and solutions. This will contribute to easing the transition to a more sustainable world for both humans and nature. We also want to focus on, as well as stimulate, the positive things that take place in the society. This will help to turn media's exaggerated focus on crises, problems, and negative news to ideas, solutions, and positive news. All this will give mankind a greater hope. It will also stimulate creativity, inspire, and bring joy.

Everyone can contribute with ideas

Everyone shall have the possibility to inform and send in ideas, innovations, inspirations, visions etc., in accordance with certain criteria. This might strengthen the portals and possibly make them big over time, as there is a constant flow of new ideas. This will make it interesting and meaningful to follow for a lot of people, and thus, creativity might bloom.

Avoid reinventing the wheel again

Almost every human problem is solved somewhere in the world already (as this book shows examples of), but few know of them. It's so fragmented that very often the wheel needs to be reinvented again. This is inefficient and cumbersome. By gathering good ideas in a portal such as this, this problem would be solved.

Social development will accelerate

By gathering solutions in a portal, there is no need to waste a lot of time and money unnecessary, with things that already exists, while the focus is kept on positivity, a self-reinforcing effect will take place. This will contribute to accelerating the social development.

There are also some other positive elements where GaiaInnovations can contribute. It can stimulate to more cooperation, also across national borders, something that's more important than ever. It can contribute to more long-term and holistic thinking, by spreading information about the earth, cycles, recycling, and that we are all connected to each other and to the ecosystems of the world.

Here are some examples of what our two web portals can be used for and who can use them. (The suggestions are based on one of the 12 sectors in the Innovation Portal – the environment):

- Decision makers in public enterprises and private sector can find more effective solutions, that contributes to a sustainable society while giving environmental and economic profit.
- Humans can be inspired to contribute to other people's environmental projects or get ideas to create their own things, and thereby contribute to the environment and create more jobs.
- Find inspiration for environmentally friendly solutions, which we can use in our homes and lives.
- A journalist might find plenty of things to write about.
- Politicians might find new, sustainable environmental solutions.
- Investors can find interesting environmental projects.
- Researchers and innovators can find partners, contribute with cases, and be inspired.
- Students and pupils at schools, universities, and colleges can get information about all the new things that's going on, and thereby creativity and new ways of thinking will be stimulated.

The main inspiration behind the Innovation Portal is an American woman called **Barbara Marx Hubbard**. She has worked for a long time to systemize and categorize positive ideas and innovations in the society. Already in 1984, as **Vice President candidate** at the Democratic National Convention in the USA, she launched the idea that we need a new, social feature that can *«look for, map, connect and announce what's working in the USA and the rest of the world.»*

The thought was that every country should get their own portal for innovations and ideas within all sectors of the society. These should then be connected and run on a state level. This has not happened yet.

Barbara Marx Hubbard called the system **Wheel of Cocreation**. Many prominent persons regard this system as one of the world's most important ideas. All human topics (entirety) should be represented in this wheel of innovation, that is divided into these 12 sectors.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle based on problems and symptoms and go over to a golden circle based on solution and causes.

Barbara's thought was that the best solutions/ideas should be gathered in this wheel of innovation. She called some of these innovations for «Golden innovations». They stand out from common innovations and ideas because they have a deep, transforming and positive impact on the society. Several criteria were set up for these ideas; the solution should, among other things, have worked for two years, it should be cost effective in the long run, it should be possible to duplicate it, and it should be based on a higher level of consciousness and freedom etc. By focusing on things that already had proved to work, a lot of unnecessary political debates can be avoided.

One of the reasons it did not happen, was that the time was not ripe for it back in 1984. In addition, it's also a huge project, and neither is it profit oriented.

I mean that it is easier to implement this today. Norway was the first country in the world to create a Ministry of Climate and Environment. This happened back in 1972. *Which country will be the first in the world to create a Ministry of Solutions? Or maybe it should be a coalition of countries working together in creating an international solution center?* One could start focusing on one of the 12 sectors, for instance, the environment, then the project wouldn't be that big in the beginning.

Since the idea was launched in 1984, Internet has shown up, making the possibilities endless and easier than before. The time is also riper.

There are already some simpler versions with a focus on good news and solutions, and I have already referred to some of those earlier in this book. The one that might be compared best, that I know of, is **Sustainia**. It's an alliance of international organizations, companies, and citizens working to create a sustainable future with the solutions available today. They identify readily available sustainability solutions across the world and demonstrate their potential impacts and benefits in their work with cities, companies, and communities. Recommended reading is their annual report the *Sustainia100*. The 2016 report showcasing everything from health solutions that tackle climate change, to renewable energy products that alleviate gender inequality.

New ones arrive as well, like the new web page of Findhorn Foundations **New Story Hub**. This is a platform of resources, mainly in the form of articles, and where new «stories» are presented that can replace the old and outdated ones. They also have launched a movie **New Story Film**, which is available for free on their web page. **The Solution Library** at Global Ecovillage Network is a place where solutions from all over the internet are gathered in one easy-to-browse platform to help create a more sustainable world.

Today, many can see the advantage with a focus on solutions, like **Michael Moore** from the USA. One of his latest documentary, *Where to invade next*, is all about getting the best ideas and solutions from countries outside the USA and bring them back. This includes everything from a good term for wages and vacation (Italy), better school lunches (France), better education (**Finland**), better prisons (Norway) etc. Also, the film **Tomorrow** focus on solutions.

It's still a huge project to launch, in relation to the original plans. But to solve this, I have chosen an easier and simpler solution. The advanced and innovative possibilities brought on by the Internet, makes this possible.

If you want to change the society, the greatest impact would be to create something new instead of trying to change what's already there. That's also why GaiaInnovations is a new and independent project. The following quote says it all:

«To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.»

- R. Buckminster Fuller

GaiaInnovations will also work to change focus from:

- Problems to solutions
- Symptoms to causes
- Negative to positive
- Unconscious to conscious
- Indifference to engagement
- Depression to hope

We are flooded with negative news. Environmental problems, natural disasters, and other crises come more frequently, and receive plenty of attention. Some get a strong desire to do something, while others lose courage, gets depressed and apathetic.

It's more inspiring to watch positive news than negative ones. It's also so that what you focus on is reinforced, and create ripples. More than ever, it's important to highlight all the positive going on. This will show that it is possible, that there is hope, and that there actually are solutions to most of our problems.

GaiaInnovations wants to present new thoughts that can replace our old and dysfunctional ones. This is necessary to create a world in balance.

All this is the reason why we created our second portal, called the Inspiration Portal.

This portal will consist of three smaller information channels, consisting of the following:

Positive News

This is the place for positive news. In a world so filled with problems and crises, it's important to know that there are plenty of positive things going on. Much of this is under-communicated, while crises and problems receive huge attention. This creates a wrong image of the world. As the world is now, we need something new and positive to strive for, something that lifts and brings hope and optimism. We don't

need more of what only gives us a feeling of powerlessness, push us down and makes us paranoid. What we focus on creates ripples. We want to create positive ripples.

Future Worldview

Our worldview forms our life, both individually and collectively. As the world is today, it's obvious that the human «operating system» (our worldview) needs to be upgraded. Both our economy, politics, and culture are results of our worldview. There are several thousand religions and belief systems that form our worldview. They are mainly operated from the old operating system. This is not an information channel to promote any of them. Neither do we wish to promote a scientific worldview saying that the world is mechanical. We believe everything is alive and holy, at it must be treated as such. We are concerned about what reunites, not what separates. We want to highlight what can contribute to lifting our worldview and thus create a new and better operating system, that will benefit everything and everyone now and in the future.

The Human Spirit

This place is dedicated to uplifting stuff, emphasizing on short videos and histories from the real world. Everything that can lift the human spirit can be included here. It can be something that shows us how to care for each other, the animals and nature. This is not a place for meaningless issues, it must touch us humans on an emotional level. It must be something that gives us hope, inspiration, laughter, and insight. In short, something that lifts the human spirit.

The author, **Neale Donald Walsch** was the inspiration behind creating the Inspiration portal. Many of the elements mentioned here have been repeatedly highlighted in his books. This was also where I read about Barbara Marx Hubbard and her Wheel of cocreation for the first time. He even wrote a biography about her called *The Mother of Invention*.

To be inspired and see that there are many working for the earth, will

increase the possibility to succeed with the transformation to a sustainable society. So, if you know about a great human invention or something inspiring yourself, tell us about it!

GaiaInnovations shall be a source of inspiration and creativity, where you can be uplifted and stimulated to contribute to a more environmentally friendly world, free of problems. Therefore, GaiaInnovations has a self-reinforcing effect.

Many people today understand how serious our problems are. It is important to inform about the problems, but solutions and positive measures are under-communicated. We can, therefore, with great certainty conclude that people will find our two portals to be of great inspiration and a very positive contribution when it comes to solving many of the problems the world is struggling with.

These two web portals, the Portals of Innovation and Inspiration, can show us our potential and possibilities to create a brighter future for us all.

It's possible to create a brighter future without any problems, but to do this we need willpower, cooperation, and sharing. And for that, we need to change our attitudes. If we can do this, we can turn the current condition, which is full of problems and discouragement, to a future filled with solutions, optimism, and hope. That is the goal of GaiaInnovations.

Chapter 16

Conscious evolution

«Metaphorically speaking birth is our crises, potentially the birth of a more developed human being, a universal human being, with the ability to cocreate a new planetary civilization and finally the universal humanity.»

- Barbara Marx Hubbard

I will not let go of Barbara Marx Hubbard yet, whom we talked about in the last chapter because she has good and constructive views when it comes to crises and the future of mankind. It's not without reason that Barbara has been called a futurist and visionary. Here is a summary of what she says.

Barbara Marx Hubbard is probably most known for her book, **Conscious Evolution**, which was published in a revised edition in 2015. I also recommend her movies *Visions of a universal humanity* and *Humanity ascending*. In brief, the book (and her movies) is about how we, throughout history, have been unconscious in relation to our actions on behalf of the planet. We have now developed to the stage where we consciously can control further development. We can choose to ruin this world or choose to create an amazing world with unlimited possibilities. In other words, we are at the beginning of a new age of conscious evolution.

There is no doubt that the world goes through huge crises and notice

the massive environmental consequences. Some man-made crises tend to go in circles. We had a bank crisis in 2008, but also in the 1930s great depression. According to Barbara Marx Hubbard, the development goes in circles, but it takes the shape of spirals so that we continue to reach higher levels.

Already at a young age, she saw the danger with the enormous power held by man. With the nuclear bomb, you could eradicate the world and with gene technology, you could change life forms, create new ones, or destroy the existing. And in a world with many self-centered humans in structures of power, mostly top-down structures, the risk that it could go wrong is present.

Her life task has been to find the positive in all this power we have. As a teenager, she asked herself the following question: *What is the good meaning behind our new power?* The reason for this question was that the Americans had just released nukes over Japan, and she thought that there also had to be positive way to use our power, and not only to destroy.

She has extensively used the nature as an example of the transformation now happening to man. She thinks that the earth goes through a «birth», and that we now have the potential to create a new world, better than the one we already know. She uses the analogy about the caterpillar who becomes a butterfly to describe the situation we are facing. And there are more parallels than it seems. Before the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, it carries «imaginary cells» where the potential and the information about the future butterfly are present. During the chrysalis stage, the existing cells notice the new cells and try to maintain status quo by fighting them (in the human world this is equivalent to when the established holds on to old systems. In some cases, with drastically means, like the killings of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr.) At one point, these cells will be strong enough and many enough to transform the caterpillar and develop it to the next stage, the butterfly.

She thinks that crises come before transformation so that the crises and problems we go through are the force making us develop further. A new earth is about to be born, in other words, the process man and earth

are going through is completely natural. But, as everybody knows, a birth can be dramatical and the result uncertain. Like the child in the mother's womb, the baby cannot grow any further. It has become too big and must get out. It's the same way with us. Our way of living has grown to such an extent that the world cannot handle it anymore. We are around 7.5 billion people and consume more than the planet can cope with. Or, Gaia can handle the strain (through millions of years, it has been used to correct imbalances), it's man and all life on the planet which are in trouble if we don't change. Our way of living is outdated, and not sustainable. We must either change and become «butterflies» or be at risk to annihilate ourselves.

We see that our current crises can be compared to earlier, developmental growth points. The only difference is that we now know that we are about to annihilate ourselves. This is what she calls «conscious evolution» – the strongest signal we have ever received that it is time to wake up and grow up.

Further, Barbara says that new systems are breaking through, while the old are breaking down. The new development always creates a higher consciousness and more freedom by creating something new and more complex than the old. The development happens in leaps, through the interaction of many forces. Different units come together to form a new entirety larger than the sum of the parts.

«Our crises is a birth. We are one living system and we have come to the limit of one phase of natural growth on a finite planet... We must learn ethical evolution quickly... As we seek to facilitate a gentle birth, a graceful and nonviolent transition to the next stage of our evolution, we will discover a natural pattern, a design of our birth transition, and develop a plan to cooperate with this design.»

- Barbara Marx Hubbard

Barbara thinks that we need to be midwives for our own birth to the next stage of our development. In this connection, we can mention her term suprasex. Here are some phrases from her book *The new human*:
«When it comes to sex, we have a longing to merge our genes and conceive a child;

when it comes to suprasex, we want to merge our abilities to give birth to our greater self and our doings in the world. Through reproductive love we create children. Through cocreative love we create new worlds.»

Noomap in the Netherlands is a network working to connect people in the cocreative community described above (suprasex). They have come long in establishing a worldwide system. They want to offer individuals and societies all over the world the possibility to take part in a synergistic cocreation. In connection with this, they will create an online platform based on holonics. The goal is to create a «holonic world wide web».

Another online platform under development having the same aims is **WeCO**. On their Facebook page, they write; «WeCO is a platform that allows us change-makers, misfits, earth-lovers, system busters, activists, and dreamers to easily connect and co-create.» They are working for a global release late 2017.

As a society, we should break the vicious circle where we look at the earth as if it is about to be destroyed and die, and go over to a golden circle, where we look at the earth as if it goes through a new birth where new life is created.

Here, at the end of this book, I have chosen to let Barbara Marx Hubbard herself tell about this "birth". She had what she called «an expanded reality experience». Here is the background for her experience, the experience itself and some thoughts she made afterward. (the excerpt is from the book *Birth 2012 and beyond*, published by **The Shift Network**):

Our crises is a birth

In 1966, I was reading Reinhold Niebuhr, a Christian philosopher and theologian, on the subject of community. He was quoting St. Paul: «For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.» Later that day I

took a walk behind my home with those words ringing in my ears. It was a freezing winter day in Lakeville, Connecticut. As I contemplated that idea, I felt a deep frustration. The early Christians had a story to tell - no one knows the exact details of Jesus' nativity - but it was one simple story that changed the world: *that a child was born*. Everyone from kings to peasants could understand this story. Suddenly a new question burst forth in my mind. I spoke it out loud, raising my eyes to the icy white sky: «What is *our* story? What in our age is a story comparable to the story of the birth of Christ?» I stopped my walk and listened with a poised mind. And the universe responded to me.

I refer to it as an «expanded reality experience». My mind's eye suddenly was in outer space like an astronaut, while at the same time I was aware of myself as a member of the planet. I felt the Earth struggling to coordinate while the mass media was communicating pain through the nervous system of the planet. Our earth felt like a living organism. It was running out of nonrenewable energy and being polluted, and was torn apart by our overgrowth in the womb of Earth. I felt pain and suffering of hunger, wars, prisons, the destruction of other species and nature, just as if it were happening in my own body. I felt the whole Earth as one organic whole of which all of us are living members.

The movie of creation that was being presented to me kept unfolding. I then was able to see a few frames ahead into the future. In some mysterious way, it was a forecast of the story of our «birth» on the planetary scale. Empathy started to spread throughout the whole planet. The pain of one was being felt by all. We were connecting with each other, feeling with each other as members of one body.

As empathy increased, spirituality started to emerge from within us. This was not God coming from above or outside us telling us what to do or be. Instead, it was the Spirit within, rising up in each person like a great tide of love, inspiration, and oneness with the source of our being, activating us by the millions. I felt the great light that the mystics speak of radiating outward from within us all.

Then, in a flash, I felt all people on Earth, and the earth itself, being healed, spontaneously. We felt alive, excited, loving one another, filled

with expectancy, and anticipation. And along with all this, the mass media began to pick up stories of people loving each other, of people being healed, people being creative. The media itself, our global nervous system, was being transformed as it communicated the real *good news* of our breakthroughs.

In that flashing movie-like experience, I saw that when enough of us are connected, there would be a shared feeling of joy and global coherence. In that moment of revelation, I felt waves of unconditional love for the whole planetary body and all Earth-life spreading through millions of us.

Then, something entirely different was yet again presented. I was somehow quickly taken back to the creation of the universe, to the great flaring forth. Out of «no thing at all» came forth «everything that was, is and will be.» It was like a great flash of light unfolding in a brief second that then provided a sped-up movie of creation – like the time laps films of a plant from the bulb to the stalk and then to the sudden, unexpected bloom of the flower. I tumbled through the whole 13.7 billion years of evolution, from the formation of energy, matter, Earth, primitive life, animal life, human life, to us going around the next turn on the spiral of evolution.

The universe had indeed responded to my question. Finally, the vision ended when, deep in my heart, I heard these words: «**Our story is a birth.** It is the birth of humankind as one body. What Christ and all the great avatars came to Earth to tell us is true. We are one, we are good, we are whole, we are being born... Go tell the story of our birth, Barbara!»

I was completely galvanized and excited by this experience. I ran home and told my husband and five children what had happened. I told them that I felt called to go forth and tell the story of the birth of ourselves as a universal humanity. As you might imagine, they were shocked by my sudden announcement of a new life mission, and they feared that I might even abandon them.

Later, while putting his small arms around me, my nine-year-old son Wade said, «Mom, you are doing what mothers should do. You are

creating a future for your children. I know you love us.»

I kissed him, holding him in my arms. I told him, «Darling Wade, I love you so much. Your mother's a pioneer and I want you all to come with me... let's be pioneers together.»

Almost everything I had seen in my peak experience is happening now. As we enter the period of 2012 and beyond, a growing awareness of our global crises is intensifying, especially with respect to climate change and the possible destruction of our whole life support system. We are in what philosopher Ervin Laszlo calls a «chaos point.»

Laszlo states, «A Chaos point is the crucial tipping point in the evolution of a system in which trends that have brought the system to its present state break down and it can no longer return to its prior states and modes of behavior. It is launched irreversibly on a new trajectory that leads either to breakdown or to breakthrough to a new structure and a new mode of operation.» (*The Chaos Point: 2012 and Beyond*, p. vii). In his essay later in this book, «Global Bifurcation: The 2012 Decision Window,» Ervin presents our choice in stark terms.

What I have also discovered since 1966 is that we cannot right the current situation by restoring or reforming old forms and structures, including governmental and religious institutions. As I pointed out earlier, they simply can't handle the crises we are facing which, in many ways, they are still causing. We must seek new forms, new structures, and new ways of living that are vital, sustainable, and just – for all Earth life.

Fortunately, these new forms and structures are now emerging. Young «universal humans» are waking up. They are connecting and communicating at the speed of light through cell phones, Twitter, Facebook, and other forms of social networking. Systems theory shows us that small islands of coherence in a sea of chaos can jump a whole system to a higher order. This kind of quantum leap in society is a real possibility now.

Those who is part of this coherence is everyone on Earth who is waking up to greater love, purpose, compassion, connectivity, and the desire to cooperate – all those *cultural cocreatives* throughout the world who are committed to a better future. It also includes all believers in any faith tradition on the planet who are to go beyond the limits of their beliefs and see what resonates as true in their hearts.

What's emerging is far more than a new religion, political party, or enterprise. I believe it's an evolutionary breakthrough of consciousness and creativity with as great a potential as the sudden appearance of self-aware humans fifty thousand years ago. So, are we approaching a planetary birth in real time? It *could* happen when enough people on Earth feel interconnected and coherent as members of one planetary body. This book is a special call to the pioneering souls.

What I do believe is this: We have the resources, technologies, and know-how right now to make the world work for everyone. In fact, we may be just one small fraction of an evolutionary second away from this experience of our «birth» as a universal humanity. But do we have the will and the courage to make it happen?

Chapter 17

Final words pointing towards a new start

«We are in a crisis of perception because we see ourselves as something other than completely interconnected and interdependent. There are no other solutions to the world's problems than a change in consciousness.»

- Deepak Chopra

As humans, we are young. We are in a rather early stage of our development. The proof of that is that we still haven't been able to stop wars, abolish poverty, as well as the fact that the difference between rich and poor is still far too big. Not to mention the massive environmental problems we have inflicted on the earth and thus, ourselves.

We have so much more to learn, understand and experience. It's, therefore, important to expand our horizon, expand the consciousness and work with ourselves. This will benefit all. The future depends on it. We cannot go on as before, we must change direction, or risk falling off the cliff, and nobody wants that. By the way, I am convinced that it will not happen.

Not only apps need to be upgraded. We humans also need to be upgraded. Much of the old is outdated. The whole world is at stake if we don't upgrade. If we don't change as humans, then the climate changes will make us do so, as well as our own actions which we don't understand the consequences of. The climate changes do it already, they lead us

humans closer to each other, makes us more compassionate and make us understand that we are deeply connected to each other and Mother Earth. This makes us more conscious so that our actions in the world are more harmonious with nature and each other.

When a person experience crises, it almost always leads to changes in this person's life. It's like that on a global level as well. In fact, some people called their sickness a blessing, because it transformed their life for the better.

The environmental crises force us to do changes on an individual and global level. Out of crises come something good, we understand that things must be changed and done in a new way. This is the purpose behind crises, to create an opening for transformation and changes.

We create our own reality, both as individuals and globally. We are responsible for our own lives, but also for the world. Globally, we know that it is us who have created the crises we now are facing. There is nothing else on the planet having the responsibility, neither are there negative sources outside ourselves that create the crises. They exist, and they are trying to manipulate (these forces have a long way to go in their development), but they can do nothing if we use our free will, and take control over our lives. I must correct myself, it *is* demons who creates our crises, but those are our own inner demons. If we get these shadows up and into the light, they will burst. They must not be swept under the carpet, but be seen, accepted, and forgiven – with love. First then will we be able to see the contours of a world in balance, with such an amazing potential and great opportunities that they are hard to imagine. We are like flower buds waiting to bloom.

We must not forget what we already have achieved as humans. There is less extreme poverty today, less illiteracy, less child mortality. There are fewer diseases in the third-world. We have more gender equality, more education, universal human rights have increased, including the right to self-determination. And regarding race, Obama became the first colored president of USA (which I am sure many will miss) and so on...

And since we first mentioned America's former president Obama, he stated shortly after the election in 2016 the following;

«To be optimistic about the long-term trends of the United States doesn't mean that everything is going to go in a smooth, direct, straight line. It goes forward sometimes, sometimes it goes back, sometimes it goes sideways, sometimes it zigs and zags.»

I believe that to be truth, not just for Amerika, but also for the rest of the world.

We stand at a crossroad. For several hundred years, the view on humans, the earth, and the universe has been scientific, mechanical, and materialistic. To regard the world this way is to look at it as being more or less dead and without meaning. This was, on the other hand, necessary so that we could free ourselves from old and outdated fear and superstition. It also made way for huge intellectual, technical, mechanical, and technological progress.

Now, there is time for a new change, since this view creates too many problems and vicious circles. We have seen far out in the universe with our telescopes and learned more all the time. But we must not forget that we at the same time have looked within and learned more about ourselves. By regarding humans, the earth, and the universe as living and parts of a wonderful wholeness, we get a new and more meaningful perspective. There might not be many with this mentally yet, but this will be the norm of the future. Feel the difference, it has everything to say how we think and relate to ourselves, the earth, and the universe, and thus for what we manifest:

Dead – meaningless – soulless – exploitation – depressing – alienation – indifference...

Versus

Living – meaningful – soulful – respectful – holy – community – emotions – valuable...

How can we and everything around us on this planet be alive when the prevailing scientific view the last 300 years has been that the universe is dead? It is a paradox. How can our consciousness, thoughts, and emotions, living beings like us, occur in a so-called dead matter? Paradox.

Think about this; nothing can be created without having been imagined. A car cannot occur on its own. Nothing can occur on its own, especially not something as amazing as the universe and all living life. This requires intelligence, massive intelligence, and love, massive love. And with intelligence and love combined, meaning and purpose follow. The question is, therefore; could everything in the universe be spirited from the start? And might this «spiriting» be from invisible spheres and not from this world? Is it this «spiriting» that makes everything alive, and when something dies it's only the physical «shell» that remains, while we, in the highest degree, are alive with our consciousness, thoughts, and emotions? What's great and interesting is that science itself has come closer to such an understanding. And in the future, we will see that science will approach spirituality further. Quantum physics, which shows that the universe is not as predictable and mechanical as first believed, points in that direction.

Our relationship with Mother Earth is like any other relationship. We do our mistakes in our personal relationships and learn and develop due to these mistakes. Globally, we – Mankind – learn from Mother Earth. We do our mistakes, but we learn from them. In time, we will learn to respect and treat her carefully, and in a way that doesn't cause damage. We will, sooner or later, learn to live in a beautiful and giving symbiosis, beneficial for both parties.

Regarding the universe as dead has served its purpose. As mentioned before, it freed us from fear and superstition, but the monotheistic religions and science have made the pendulum swing too much the other way. When the universe, Mother Earth, and nature are not regarded as holy and spirited, the way to exploit them is open. The lack of respect has led to serious, global crises. We have stretched the rubber band very far.

Mankind has been on a long journey away from companionship with nature and each other, towards being separated and splitting everything up in small parts, like in a mechanical worldview. We are now at the tipping point. We are about to start on a new journey, back to companionship with nature and ourselves on a higher, conscious level.

At the look of it right now, the problems of the world will continue to grow further (like the climate crises). Some other things will be worse before it gets better (like the economic crises). But things will get better! It's just a question of how fast, and how many sidetracks we take. We can anticipate several large and powerful «bumps» in the future to wake up more and more of us. We are at the turning point, but it takes time to turn this vast ship around. Globally, we have started the turnaround, and at some point, this might happen fast. There are many systems (compare it with domino systems) to be toppled, but as we all know; as soon as one domino fall, they all fall, because everything is connected.

In a TED talk from 2016 by Al Gore (**The case for optimism on climate change**), he is more optimistic than ever before. This is because there are plenty of positive things going on. The transition to renewable energy, for instance, happens a lot faster than we thought some years ago. Al Gore refers to the following quote by Rudi Dornbusch:

«Things take longer to happen than you think they will, and then they happen much faster than you thought they could.»

Changes happen fast when they happen. It often happens exponentially. There are now several thousands of organizations and movements working for a better world, and increasingly more emerge around the globe every day. Those mentioned in this book is only a small fraction of what exists and emerges. Just think about how fast the development will go, when we address and transform the real and deep problems of the human psyche, like the belief that we are separated from each other. And, when more people understand that we and everything that exists is spirited and holy. When the society has absorbed this understanding, then we are talking!

In this book, we have been through many vicious circles and seen how they can be transformed into golden circles. A common feature is that transformation is what's needed. We must change ourselves on an individual level, either we want to save the environment or create world peace. We are talking about evolution rather than revolution. Evolution is more careful, patient, it builds up, go deeper and are lasting, while

revolution is impatient, tough, it tears apart, and touches the symptoms. I can understand and sympathize with revolutions. They often happen as a reaction to unfairness, but overall evolution is more efficient. Look at the Arab Spring. That revolution did not bring about so much real change. To patch up the symptoms will not give a lasting result. So, it's quite simple. Just like a person experiences life crises and must change, this is also true for mankind. We experience crises and we are the ones who need to change. The condition of the globe reflects the condition of mankind. When we have changed, and are in balance, this will be reflected in our society.

What we believe in, as well as our convictions, values and moral, are very important. Why else did the inquisition of the dark ages go to the extreme measure of killing everyone with a different mindset? Because they thought that a different mindset was «dangerous», and a threat to their own. There is a reason as to why totalitarian regimes, which existed back then and still exist today, are clutching their distorted truths about reality and try to stop people from seeing through them and find others.

What's needed is a turnaround of our understanding of the deep context. The universe represents order, harmony, and beauty. It is alive, as I see it. We are conscious beings. And like Duane Elgin said, «*Through us the universe sees, knows, feels and learn along the way*». When everything is regarded as spirited and holy (also humans), we will get a larger respect for everything and stop inflicting Mother Earth and ourselves with huge sufferings and crises.

When you look at the world as it is today, it seems like we have created the opposite of what we wanted. Too often we see ugliness where it should be beauty, hate where it should be love, falsehood where there should be truth. But there is more than the eye can see. To get to a world full of love, beauty, truth, and joy, we must «practice» how to create it. And this is done by doing the opposite. Contrasts make us grow (so don't despair too much over today's chaotic world), but we tend to create too many of them, unnecessary. It would be an advantage to learn from our faults so that we don't have to repeat them. In a not so distant future,

there will be less contrast and fewer big ones like wars. We are heading towards a world in balance.

We can turn it around. Humans create beautiful and amazing things; music, art, design, architecture, technological progress, scientific discoveries, etc. We do amazing things. Above all, we have the ability to show love, empathy, and kindness. We *are* compassionate and loving beings and show this repeatedly. We have all the possibilities and potential to manifest even more of all these amazing things we create, are and do. The future is without limit. It's up to us to create a world in balance beneficial for all.

When I was in Damanhur in Italy, I saw a large painting that impressed me. On parts of the walls in one of the rooms of the temple under the ground, there were painted two large groups of people fighting each other, but they were all smiling... the point was that we should not forget where we come from, namely the hereafter where polarization doesn't exist and love and peace are everywhere. Today, there are strong tendencies towards polarization, but we must not forget that everyone is on different levels of development and that we all are our brothers and sisters.

We humans have already solved several problems and crises throughout history. Against great odds and strong opposition, we have managed to turn many vicious circles into golden circles. We will continue to do this until there are only golden circles left. It is just a question of time. So, be patient, evolution takes time. On the other side, from time to time there are leaps making the development go faster.

Great changes start small. A small impulse might set massive powers into motion. A small impulse might automatically change the rest. When the underlying impulses set into motion are based on tolerant, loving, open, and wise thoughts, we can create a golden paradise.

Life is not a series of random events. There is a meaning to your life and life in general. A beautiful future is waiting for us as a potential possibility. We should take this possibility. We do that when increasingly more of us understand the great picture, understand who we are, and contribute to creating this amazing, new future.

At the end, we can say that everything is about changing the human heart, our hearts... from cold hearts, focusing on themselves, to warm hearts burning for everything and everyone. Then we would be able to manifest the future we long for faster and faster, so that both You, Mankind, and Mother Earth can go towards a brighter future.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank the following persons, which one way or the other, have contributed to this book with their input and feedback.

In alphabetical order:

Anne Bulien, Gunnar Christensen, Per Henrik Gullfoss, Johnny Helleland, Briana Holberg, Gudrun Jensen, Ragnhild Johansen, Reidun Marie Jordell, Bente Marcussen, Kari Rose Norheim, Tim Owen, Andrine Tindvik Owen, Janet Pedersen.

I also want to thank family, friends and «the Wednesday group». I am also grateful to all those which indirectly has helped.

Further, I want to thank all those who have inspired me and given me insight throughout the years. Many of them are mentioned in this book.

About the Author

Henning Jon Grini was born in Bergen, Norway in 1966. All his adult life he has been concerned with the big questions in life. He is socially engaged, and have started several businesses with the intention of contributing to the planet's best, as well as lifting the human consciousness to a higher level. He has, among other things, founded, run and been editor for the Norwegian magazine and publisher «Ildsjelen» (now «Harmoni») for 12 years.

Currently, he founded the organization **Gaiainnovations**. If you want to know more about our new organization and movement, please visit our website. You can sign up for our Newsletter or become a Member. We have many Innovations and Inspirations already in our two portals. If you know about a great human invention or something inspiring tell us about it!

If you enjoyed the book, please consider leaving a review at Amazon.

*«There will come a day when people of all races, colors, and creeds
will put aside their differences. They will come together in love,
joining hands in unification, to heal the Earth and all Her
children.»*

**- From the Navajo-Hopi prophecies to The Whirling
Rainbow**

«A book about how a change in consciousness can create a world full of happiness, hope, and optimism.»

FROM BREAKDOWN TO BREAKTHROUGH

People, Mankind and Mother Earth is plagued by countless problems and crises. Everything from overspending, exploitation, corruption, populist leaders and terrorism to economic differences, poverty, health problems, and loneliness. On top of that, we have huge environmental problems.

These problems can only be taken by their root if we are going to get lasting solutions, otherwise, we only treat the symptoms. By identifying the core causes to our manmade problems and crises, we can change these «vicious circles» we have entangled ourselves into and create «golden circles».

Even if we see breakdowns in the society, there are also several breakthroughs, which don't receive the same amount of attention. This book seeks to reverse this, by offering several «new» thoughts, referrals to solutions, and ways to improve our lives and society.

This book is therefore very much a book of resource and solution, with a host of references to people, companies, websites, organizations and much more that point to new ways of living and organizing our lives and communities.

The human being is under development and are now having growing pains in form of our global crises. By shifting the focus from problems to solutions, and from symptoms to causes, we would be well on our way to create a new world to the benefit for ourselves and future generations.



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was born in Bergen, Norway in 1966. All his adult life he has been concerned with the big questions in life. He is socially engaged, and have started several businesses with the intention of contributing to the planet's best, as well as lifting the human consciousness to a higher level. He has, among other things, founded, run and been an editor for the Norwegian magazine and publisher «Ildsjelen» (now «Harmoni») for 12 years. Currently, he founded the organization Gaiainnovations.

